

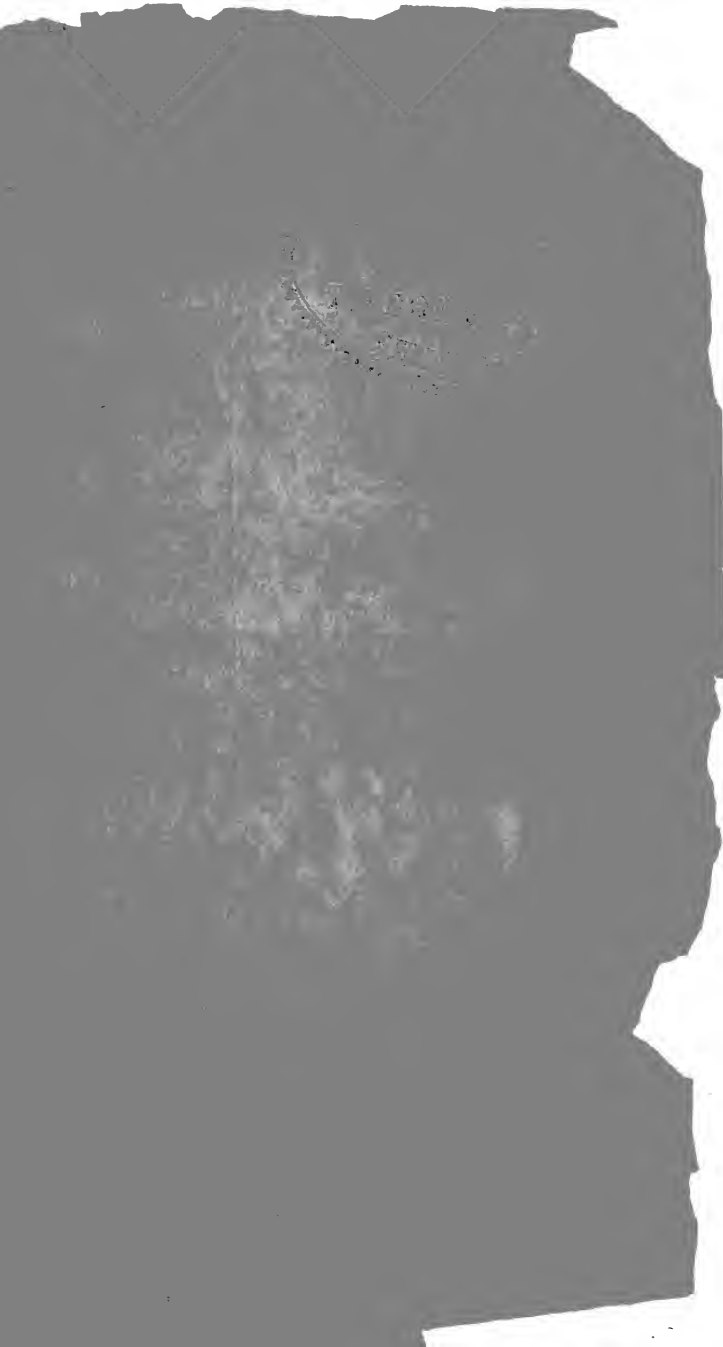


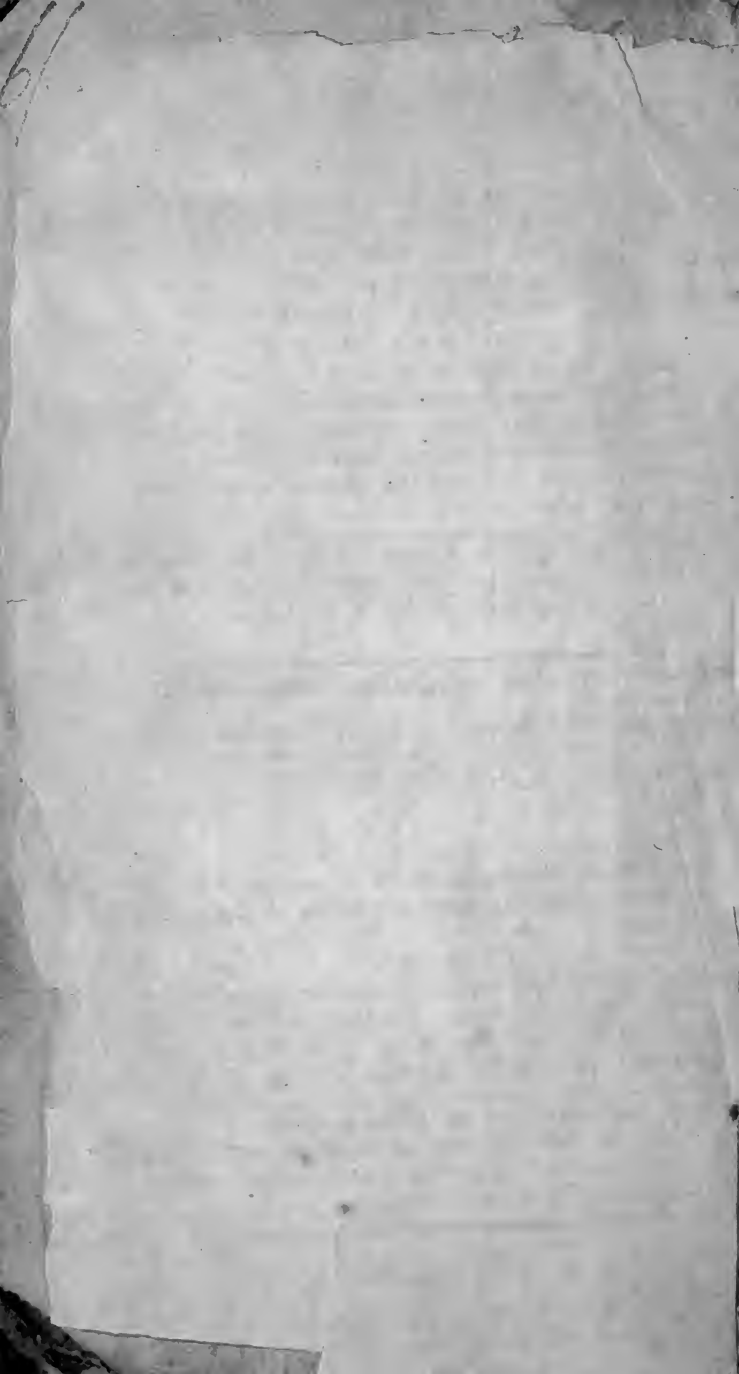
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Faithful Contendings displayed:

B E I N G

An historical relation of the State and Actings of the suffering Remnant in the church of *Scotland*, who subsisted in Select Societies, and were united in general correspondencies during the hottest time of the late Persecution, viz. from the year 1681 to 1691.

T O G E T H E R W I T H

An account of the State of the land in general, and of the Society people in particular, in the intervals betwixt each of their general meetings, with some pertinent remarks upon these historical occurrences, and many letters to and from the general correspondent meetings. &c.

Collected and kept in record by Mr. MICHAEL SHIELDS, who was clerk unto these general Societies, and personally present at most of their meetings.

MAL. iii. 16. Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.

Heb. x. 25. Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.

T O W H I C H I S A D D E D,

Ten Considerations on the danger of apostacy and defection from a covenanted work of reformation. By Mr. James Guthrie, sometime minister of the Gospel at Stirling.

A S A L S O,

A collection of very valuable Sermons, preached by these faithful and eminent Servants of Jesus Christ, Messrs. *John Kid, John King, John Welch, John Blackadder, John Dickson and Gabriel Semple.*

Collected and transcribed by JOHN HOWIE, and published at the desire of some of those who desire to own the same testimony that some of those authors owned and sealed with their blood.

G L A S G O W :

Printed by JOHN BRYCE, and Sold by him at his Shop, opposite Gibson's-Wynd, SALT-MARKET.

M, DCC, LXXX.



THE
P R E F A C E

T O T H E

U N D E R S T A N D I N G R E A D E R .

J U D I C I O U S R E A D E R ,

BY a minute observation of the church militant, thou wilt find that she has been often reduced unto this sad dilemma, SIN or SUFFER. Indeed, there is no allowance for sin, but there is such an arcana in the lot of the children and people of God, that if they resolve not to sin, then suffer they must.—*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*—For no sooner was the old serpent cast out of heaven, then he exco-
gitated means to ruin the whole human species; and no sooner was that malevolent design in part accomplished*, and that gracious promise promulgated in the garden,—*I will put enmity between thee and the woman,* &c. than the conflict betwixt the flesh and the spirit, the righteous and the wicked, began. And no sooner was that red dragon mentioned, Rev. xii. cast out unto the earth, than he *persecuted the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

BUT then the church and people of God may be called out unto various kinds of sufferings for a faithful adherence unto this testimony; for, not to mention general calamities and desolating judgments,—sometimes they may be called forth to bear the most invidious re-

a 2

proaches

- The infernal serpent; he it was whose guile
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from heaven with all his host;
In meditated fraud and malice bent
On man's destruction, maugre what might hap
Of heavier on himself, fearless, returned.

proaches and calumnies, that envy can invent or ignorance can entertain: *they shall revile you, and speak all manner of evil of you for my name's sake.*—Sometimes they may be called out to suffer by the loss of their worldly substances, or temporal enjoyments, *And they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods.*—Again, they may be called forth to suffer *bonds and imprisonments*; yea, to endure stripes, and divers kinds of torments for his name's sake, and for the testimony of a good conscience:—*others were tortured, not accepting of deliverance.* But then they are sometimes called out unto the highest degree of suffering in this life; and that is, to lay down their lives for the cause of Christ,—*And I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God.* Nay, sometimes such is the catastrophe, that all these are compounded into one potion, and cast into the cup of their sufferings, and this seems to have been the case with those whose actions and contendings are in the following sheets described.

HERE it might be accounted a superfluity in the entry, either to apologize for this publication, or yet to treat of the origin, rise or occasion of the transactions therein mentioned; seeing that for the first, the subject will answer for itself; and for the last, it is anticipated in the introduction, or preliminary discourse to the subject. What craves thy attention further concerning the instruments by which these transactions were carried on,—the subject itself,—and somewhat of the institution, warrant, duty and utility of Christian fellowship in society and correspondent meetings, may be pointed out very shortly in these few particulars following. And

First, As to the instruments, let me premise, that although the suffering of Christ in his mystical members, be a most mournful and gravaminous subject; yet it wants not its own proper use and advantages, unto those who are rightly exercised thereby, while the Lord's goodness is most graciously displayed in the midst of all these sufferings, whether unto themselves or unto others †. And

I. For

† Good when he gives, supremely good;
Nor less when he denies;
Even crosses from his sovereign hand,
Are blessings in disguise.

HARVEY.

1. For instance, here was a poor, suffering (but wrestling) handful of Christ's faithful witnesses, reduced unto the utmost extremity, not only extruded and excluded from all benefit and privilege of law; but even deprived and bereaved of the gospel, that most valuable privilege; their worthy pastors who should have been as high goats *before the flock*, being not only thrust out and banished from them, but even those few who for their faithfulness had *jeopardied their lives in the high places of the field*, were by wicked hands violently grasped from them, and killed;—So that their eyes *could now no more behold their teachers*.—But lo, in this extremity, the Lord mercifully interposed by directing them in this critical juncture of affairs, unto an embodying of themselves into a general correspondence out of their select societies, which became of great and unspeakable advantage unto them. For thereby they not only came to know one another's welfare and mind anent the dispensations of the time; but were also enabled to consult, agitate and conclude upon such methods and measures, as were most helpful unto them for the carrying on a testimony publicly for the cause of Christ, and every one of his persecuted and born down truths in that dark and cloudy day. And

2. It is to be remarked, that altho' they were exposed unto the utmost danger and hardships, by a bloody enemy, who was still upon the pursuit in quest of them; yet (if I mistake not) they never, except one, suffered the least injury in coming to and going from these meetings, tho' several of them were taken and killed otherways.—And what is most noticeable of all, is, that it could not have been rationally thought that such a poor wasted remnant could have subsisted or held out so long, considering the manifold and most excruciating hardships and sufferings they were reduced unto, being killed with cold,—killed with hunger,—killed in the fields,—killed upon the seas,—killed upon scaffolds,—killed under colour of law; and killed without all colour of law;—and yet with the Lord's people of old, *The more they were oppressed, the more they grew*; while they continued faithful unto, and stedfast with him. This little grain of mustard seed planted by his own hand and watered by the blood of so many gallant martyrs, *nam sanguis martyrum semen ecclesie est*, The blood of the martyrs is the seed

seed of the church.—*And he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*

Secondly, For the subject itself, there is therein contained, 1. A short sketch of the rise and somewhat of the nature of these meetings or general correspondencies. 2. A summary of the principal actings and conclusions of the said meetings. 3. A brief hint of the land's sufferings in general, and themselves in particular, during the intervals. 4. There is a series of interesting letters, both edifying and instructing (some of whom were before in print) with several other valuable papers which will, doubtless, yield information unto those who desire to be informed ament the affairs of that time, besides a variety of remarks interspersed thro'out the whole of the subject.—Only as the true state of the testimony seems to be somewhat overlooked at the revolution by the writer of this register; * there is somewhat in their conduct at that time that deserves our further consideration, such as their guarding the corrupt convention of estates;—their raising a regiment, and associating with malignants;—their espousing the interest of the prince and princess of Orange, without scriptural and covenant qualifications; and their uniting with a corrupt and backslidden ministry. But as these are touched at a little in the appendix, I shall only here in short observe,

That altho' the Lord still preserved some, then and in all ages, who designed faithfully to contend for the word of Christ's patience, yet sure, it was a pity so many Samsons, famous for contending and weathering out so many storms of hazard and dangers for their faithfulness, should have had their hair so easily cut by foundering upon these rocks of compliance; which may serve as a beacon for an example of caution unto future ages, shewing that it is as impossible for men intending honesty and faithfulness, either to tamper or join, *salus inire,*

† If any desiderate, or want to know any thing concerning Mr. Michael Shields, take the following hint.—He was son to James Shields of Houghhead, (in the Merse) and brother to the well known Mr. Alexander Shields. He had received a competent measure of education. He became a clerk to the general meeting during the most part of these transactions; but fell in with the revolution church, and at last went over with his brother amongst others to the settlement at Darien, 1699. Whether he died in the wilds of Caledonia, on the sea, in Jamaica, or at Charleston bar in Carolina, we know not; but he never returned.

inire, with malignants and compliers, and to retain their former integrity; as for the most lucid river, when gliding unto the salt and fluid ocean, to retain its sweet taste and most chryſtalline colour †.—Indeed, it moſt be granted in their behalf, that they had been long groaning under the cruel yoke of prelacy, oppreſſion, tyranny and ſlavery: now by the revolution they were reſtored unto their natural rights and privileges: Preſbyterian miniſters were reſtored, and ſeveral acts made againſt them in the perſecuting period repealed:—A general aſſembly called: The confeſſion of faith ratified:—and preſbytery eſtabliſhed by act of parliament in Scotland; whereby the nation was in a great meaſure freed from tyranny and ſlavery.—But then upon an impartial enquiry, it will be found after all, that theſe who ſtood their ground in adhering to the whole of a covenanted work of reformation, and contending for the ſame both in church and ſtate, had relevant grounds and reaſons for their conduct in ſo doing.—For

1ſt, No king nor queen at, or ſince the revolution, were or are qualified with ſcriptural and covenant qualifications, nor took the ancient Scots coronation oath; which qualifications were, by ſeveral laudable acts of parliament, made the fundamental qualifications, *ſine qua non*, of admiſſion to that office by the laws of the crown*: But on the contrary, are ſworn to maintain the Engliſh conſtitution and prelatic hierarchy in direct oppoſition unto the ſame ſworn to in the ſolemn league and covenant.

2dly,

† From the following ſheets it is evident, That as long as the United Societies were favoured with the advices and doctrines delivered by pious and faithful Mr. James Renwick, whatever fell in their way that was disagreeable, yet they ſtill kept ſtraight in the main, as to the point of public teſtimony. But no ſooner had they got Mr. Shields, or rather Meſſrs. Lining and Boyd, than they fell into one ſtep of compliance after another, of which theſe men were the principal abettors. The obſervation is, That a faithful and orthodox miniſtry, is one of the greateſt privileges, next to Chriſt or the goſpel offer itſelf, that mankind do, or poſſibly can enjoy: On the contrary, a ſet of lazy, heterodox, corrupt and unfaithful miniſters, muſt be one of the worſt of evils that a church or poor people can be poſſibly plagued with: *The leaders of this people cauſe them to err, and they that are led of them are deſtroyed.*

* Vide act 5. Parl. 1640. act 6. 1644. act 15. Parl. 1649.

2dly, Although prelacy was then abolished in Scotland, yet it was neither then nor since declared to be contrary to the word of God; and though Presbytery was then established in Scotland, "as agreeable to the word of God," yet it was never declared to be of divine institution founded thereupon, but only as it was agreeable unto the inclinations of the people, founded upon the claim of right. Herein there was a retrograde motion of near a hundred years back unto an act of Parl. 1592. whereby the whole of our purest reformation was over-passed and over-looked. Nor

3dly, Has there been any judicial act in church or state at or since the Revolution, made in favours of our covenants? nay, not so much as a repeal of that wicked and nefarious act of parliament made in the reign of James VII. declaring *the giving, taking or owning of them to infer the pains of high treason*. Or

4thly, Is there any positive act to be found amongst the archives of the nation, by which that heaven-daring act rescissory (annulling all the acts betwixt 1640 and 1649) is repealed? If there is not, the whole legal establishment of the true Protestant Presbyterian form of church-government must stand yet publicly condemned.—

5thly, Notwithstanding of a faint act made at the Revolution declaring the first act Parl. 2. Charl. II. asserting his Majesty's supremacy, &c. as inconsistent with Presbyterian government, and what ought to be abrogated †: yet by virtue of the English constitution, into which the Scots constitution is now twisted, by the 2d and 3d Articles of the union, they still retain and continue in the exercise of, that usurped power over the church and heritage of the Lord: witness the king's nominating and appointing clergymen unto their ecclesiastical charges;—The calling and adjourning church judicatories and even sometimes *sine die*;—imposing oaths upon church men and appointing acts of fasts and thanksgiving under civil penalties; the patronage act;—the toleration bill;—Porteous act;—the Quebec act; the Popish bill in England and Ireland, with a concatenation of other encroachments, all flowing from that exotic head. And

Lastly, These who carried on the bloody persecution, those who favoured popery, prelacy, &c. and those who

† See act 1. Parl. 1. Sess 2. of William and Mary, 1689.

who had made defection thereunto, were neither purged out of church, nor state, at or since the revolution: and how could it be otherways, seeing these men mostly had engrossed the public affairs into their hands, that had been made members in the duke of York's parliament, (some of whom had their hands reeking in the blood of the saints) and who had not only forfeited all right to represent, sit, or vote in any lawful judicatory; but had even forfeited their very lives unto the law of the Lord, (whatever they might pretend from the laws of men) *for whosoever shall shed man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.*

And for the revolution church, was it not compounded complexly of old public resolutioners, those who had accepted of that woeful and church renting indulgence, and those who had taken several sinful oaths unto the late tyrannical government: and add unto all these some hundred tested and non-tested curates; some of whom lived in the peaceable exercise of that office until their dying day; and all without any other acknowledgment, than taking the oaths in form to the government, and subscribing the short formula.—And tho' several petitions were given in then by different parties both to church and state, for a redress of these grievances; but what answer they got or could expect, the following sheets will, in some measure, make evident*.

b

Now

* To shew that the above is no wanton charge, take the following instance in lieu of many that could be here produced, were it necessary.—And

1. When several papers were given in to the General Assm. 1690. all the answer they got from the committee was. That what was complained of should be inserted in the causes of the national fast: and though these causes were more full than any since that time; yet the test and declaration (two of the principal evils complained of) were, at the desire of the king's commissioner and others, expunged from said act or causes, because they had taken said test and declaration.

2. Though an act was concerted in the committee of overtures, (which was brought in and read in open assembly) asserting Christ's headship over the church, yet it was then suppressed and never heard of since that time.

3. One George Meldrum, who had formerly been a curate, was not only received into the church on the foresaid terms, but chosen moderator to the assemblies, 1698, 1703. but also made professor of divinity in the college of Edinburgh; and all without any public acknowledgment of repentance for his former way.—Several who had taken the test and declaration; and
persecuted

Now these are only a few strokes in miniature, of that which has been by some called the glorious and happy revolution; for it were frustraneous to insist upon a portrait of that here which has so often and so well been delineated and figured out by others.—And if any think that what is here said bears too hard upon the revolution settlement, I answer that what was good in that establishment I have acknowledged, and in what was evil it were to be wished, that, one feature more unto the foregoing draught could not be added, not to mention the bad effects or woeful consequences daily flowing therefrom: The beholding of which, if the seeing of our eyes and the hearing of our ears could rightly affect our hearts, might make us sigh and cry out with the lamenting prophet of old:—*Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, —and being desolate, it mourneth unto me.—There is a conspiracy of her prophets: They are light and treacherous persons.—Her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.—Her princes are revolters; therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth.—Therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.* But

Thirdly, Somewhat might now be said concerning Christian fellowship and correspondant meetings in general: but as my judgment on this point may, perhaps, tally with the mind of many of those, for whom this publication is chiefly designed, I shall therefore refer them to the introduction, and their own informatory vindication on head I. And here I shall only observe.

1st, They never reckoned themselves to be a civil judicatory: for altho' for the better order in speaking, they found it necessary to choose one to occupy the place (or rather the name) of a præses; yet they never looked upon these transactions to be of a civil nature.—Indeed in such a broken state, the very end of these meetings

persecuted the people of God, upon the like terms were admitted ruling elders at the same time. And

4. When a member of the General Assembly 1722, was speaking in favour of our covenanted work of reformation to strengthen his cause, and make his demand appear more just and equitable, Mr. James Smith in Crammond, from the moderator's chair, in the face of the General Assembly, confidently declared, "that the church was not now upon thar footing," meaning the covenants.—Any who desire to see these and many more instances of the like nature, may consult De foe's memoirs, p. 320. &c. Clarkson's plain reasons, and Hepburn's humble pleadings for the good old way, *per totum*.

meetings obliged them to concert and conclude upon what was necessary and advantageous unto themselves, both as men and Christians, for the propagation and right managing of the public testimony they maintained in agreeableness to the word of God, law of nature and fundamental laws of the land.—But even in this case, where there is a standing ministry, it is sometimes found requisite and expedient to keep what they call congregational meetings to treat upon (*externum privilegium ecclesiae.*) The external privileges of the church, and this cannot be called a civil judicatory.—Nor

2dly, Did they ever look upon these correspondencies to be a church judicatory, or purely of an ecclesiastical nature, as they never took upon themselves the exercise of church discipline, or to purge scandal. Nay, it is evident from the following register, that during the whole time an ordained minister was never admitted a constitute member of the said correspondencies, altho' the presence of such, (when they had any) was many times found necessary and of great advantage for their advice and concurrence in things of an important nature. It is true, that being oft times destitute of a church judicatory, yea sometimes without a minister, or gospel ordinances altogether, they were in providence laid under a necessity to treat of things that more properly belonged to that character; such as the appointing of diets of fasting, distributing collections, &c. But if we grant this maxim, that in times and cases extraordinary, *something extraordinary may be done, this may easily be accounted for.*—Let it then suffice for an answer unto those, who have wondered what for a creature, general meetings were, That they were, (at least ought to be) a body or religious society of men and christian men, constitute, allenary, of the members of select praying societies, who had embodied themselves into christian fellowship meetings for prayer, godly conference and other religious duties for the mutual help and edification of one another.—And as this duty, whether as to select societies or correspondent meetings, is a duty not only slighted and neglected by the most part, but even objected against by many in this degenerate and apostate generation, it may be no ways impertinate here to touch a little at its divine warrant or institution, its utility and the necessity of such a duty in these few particulars following.—And

1st, For its divine warrant or institution, says the spirit of God by the Apostle to the Hebrews.—*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, &c.* Which duty we find warranted by the practices of both old and new Testament saints. And so Ezra ix. 4. *Then there were assembled unto me, every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, &c.* And Mal. iii. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, &c.* And to what purpose went they out and sat by the river of Babel, Psal. cxxxvii. but to remember and speak of Zion with other religious conversation?—It is also prophesied of as what should abound in the new-Testament church. See Jer. xxiii. 25. Zach. viii. 21.—Accordingly we find many sweet fellowship meetings kept by the Lord's people in the new-Testament times; several of whom were kept by our Lord himself with his disciples while on earth both before and after his resurrection; which for our imitation and example, are recorded in scripture †; in imitation of which, *These all continued with one accord in prayer with the women, Acts i. 14.* And to this exercise were they gathered into the house of Cornelius; and for the same purpose, and to the same work were they gathered unto the river side at Philippi, unto whom Paul preached:—And in the house of Mary, Acts xii. 12. But what needs more? nay, it became so essential to religion, that the primitive Christians made the communion of saints an article of their creed, and they looked upon them as none of their fraternity, who did not maintain, or take pleasure in the fellowship of Christians.—*I am, (says the royal Psalmist,) a companion of all that fear and obey thee.*

2^{dly}, As it is of divine institution, so it is of great use and utility unto the people of God. For

1. How many sins have been prevented and temptations defeated by Christian fellowship? Our first parent Eve was alone, when assaulted. A Peter will sometimes confess Christ in company with the apostles; who when absent from them, will shamefully deny him. For as houses or bodies of men are more apt and able to stand a storm, when built, or standing together, than alone; so members of religious societies have many times proved
help

† See Mat. xvii. 20. xxiv. 3. Mark vi. 31. Luke ix. 3. xxiv. 15. John xx 19, 21

helpful for the strengthening and supporting of one another. The wise man's maxim is, *Two are better than one; for they have a reward for their labour; for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow:—if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him: and a threefold cord is not easily broken.* And

2. The Lord has in an eminent manner countenanced this duty:—for what sweet and comfortable returns of prayer, (tho', alas! these are now in a great measure gone) have the Lord's people experienced in these meetings, both in the primitive times *, and in our reforming times; but especially in the late suffering times both before and since the revolution? witness their own dying testimonies, wherein they not only enforce and inculcate this duty upon others, but solemnly declare what their own souls had experienced thereby †. Nay, they risked their worldly ALL to enjoy the sweetness of Christian fellowship. And how shameful is it for us to be behind them in this duty, while we are not exposed to any outward hazard or amazement. Says one who had the experience of this,—*Come here, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.* And

3. The Lord has bestowed a variety of gifts upon Christians; one is endowed with quick wit and invention, another with solidity of judgment; to one is given a great stock of utterance, to another a good memory;—one is more open and zealous, another is wary and cautious; one is strong in gifts and graces, another is weak; one is oftentimes dejected and cast down, another is more facetious and cheerful: and for what purpose are all these given, but to glorify the giver, and for the edification of one another? *Wherefore, (says the apostle to the Thessalonians) comfort yourselves together, and edify one another:*

3dly, As this duty is of great use, so it is highly reasonable and necessary. For

1. It is necessary and reasonable for all lawful civil societies, to use habile methods in treating of their own interest and concerns; so it is highly expedient for the
followers

* Vide Eusebius's ecclesiastical history, lib. 3. ch. 39. lib. 5. ch. 5 and Socrates's history, lib. 1. ch. 15.

† Such as the dying testimonies of James Robertson, John Findlay, John Richmond, John Paton, Robert Milnar, Thomas Stoddart, John Nilbet: and since the revolution Sir Robert Hamilton, John Wilson, and several others.

followers of Christ, not only to concert rules and methods for the promoting of the interest of that body whereof he is the head †; but also to have a particular sympathy and fellow-feeling with one another.—It is a military maxim, whether in dangerous marches, or in a posture of defence, “to stick or stand close together.” And so ought all Christ’s faithful soldiers, if they would manage their spiritual affairs with success and to purpose.—Neither can this duty be restricted unto times of persecution only, as some would have it.—It is true, these times are very proper seasons for it: but it will be found necessary and beneficial at all times, and especially in times of defection and apostacy, and in perilous times; and never more acceptable unto God than now, when not only almost all kinds of error, infidelity and profanity abound, and even amongst professors; but also when

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† There is a variety of rules, queries, articles and directions prescribed by different authors in the method for receiving in-
trants into these meetings, which for brevity’s sake I must here omit. I shall therefore only recite a few of them which seem to be very much overlooked, even by those few who pay any attention now unto this duty.

1. “The constituent members should be of sound principles, of a blameless conversation, endowed with a competent measure of knowledge, and exercised about their soul’s case, and the declarative glory of God in the world.”

2. “In matters of the public testimony, let no member, nor yet any single meeting meddle to do any thing but with the consent of the general correspondence.”

3. “No member should take on him any public office, or undertake any debateable practice, nor go to law without acquainting the meeting for their advice and consent.”

4. “No member should go to any penny wedding, or frequent debauched company, under the pain of seclusion from the meeting.”

5. “Every member is to labour to have their conversation every way becoming the gospel, and becoming such a profession; and should do more than others do, seeing they profess more. Therefore they should be much taken up in secret prayer, reading the scriptures, and coming to public ordinances when dispensed in God’s way.” And

Lastly, “When any member falls under scandal, he is to be secluded, until he give evident signs of his true repentance, and until he both satisfy the session (if there be any) and the meeting about it.”

Any who want to see these directions, queries and articles at large, may consult Mr. Walter Smith’s rules and directions for fellowship meetings, the method to be used in receiving members into the reformed societies by Mr. Renwick and the general meeting (yet in manuscript); and Mr. Hepburn’s rules, from which the above are extracted.

we are under the awful gloom of approaching judgments, and seemingly upon the eve of some destruction; the Lord's judgments being already *abroad in the earth*, which requires the most intense diligence in keeping up the credit of religion, when so much abandoned and borne down. It behoved to be such a time as this, when these mentioned by Malachi, *spake often one to another*. And

2. Might I be permitted to use this as an argument to enforce this duty? It is the constant practice of profane and wicked men, such as stage-players, comedians, masqueraders, frequenters of balls, drunkards, thieves, highwaymen, extortioners, &c. to gather together and join in clubs, to consult ways and means to gratify their own lusts and ambition, in serving the worst of masters: and shall those who serve the best of masters be thus outstripped in advancing his interest and service, and to encourage one another in their way heavenward; altho' they should be accounted fools for this by a wicked generation, or *as a people dwelling alone, and not reckoned amongst the nations?* And

3. The decay or thriving of religion goes hand in hand with it. Look unto the times of our *Reformation*, and ye will find it so §, that when these meetings began to decay, than religion became dead and languid.—On the contrary, it has been very justly observed by some, that in any corner of the land where religion began to thrive and flourish, these meetings began as natively to be erected, as birds of one kind, in choosing their mates in the spring, begin to draw together.—No sooner was Paul converted; than he essayed to join the company of disciples. *Let us go speedily and pray before the Lord,—and I will go also.* And

Lastly, This exercise is highly requisite as an apparatus to fit and prepare us for eternal communion and fellowship with the saints above. All persons ought to be resolved in what company they take most pleasure in while upon earth. And how shall we think to keep company by the closest communion with those glorified saints above, with whom we could not think to keep fellowship with while upon earth.—It is usual for designed travellers unto a far country to choose to travel in company;—so nothing is more commodious for the traveller to the

§ For this see Fox's acts and monuments, Clark's martyrrol. Knox's hist. and letter, Oct. 1563, and Stevenson's history, &c.

the celestial country, or Jerusalem above, than to go in troops as they did of old when going up to the solemn feasts of the Lord at Jerusalem. *I went with—a multitude that kept holy days.*

AFTER all this, I know there have been and are a number of objections mustered up against these meetings: but for brevity's sake, I must here confine myself unto the three following, which I take to be the most formidable and recent at present.

OBJEC. I. *For what purpose serve these meetings, when those who frequent them, are as bad, if not worse, than many in the neighbourhood?* All I observe in answer to this, is,—That, no question, but there have been, and will be tares among the wheat, and corn amongst the chaff, until the end of the world, and the restitution of all things. And oftentimes hypocrisy goes under the name of real religion, and many times real religion is branded with the vile epithet of dissimulation; and commonly when a corrupt member, or one falling into any fault (which, alas! is now a-days become too common) is discovered, then nothing is more usual for the neighbourhood, than to judge the whole web by his swatch. But what does this militate against the duty itself, or the remanent members either? For, by a parity of reason, we might conclude that all the eleven apostles were traitors, because Judas was one. But even their own confession, implied in the charge, shews, that when they are so much offended at any thing blame-worthy in a number of such societies, (at least it says to me) that they think these ought or should be better than themselves or others; otherwise what would be observable about them above others?—But *judge not, lest ye be judged.*

OBJEC. II. It is further objected, and even by some that should preach up the necessity of such a duty, *That these meetings serve for little purpose, but to raise needless questions, and gender strife and division.* Unto this I would reply, that

I. It is now a long time, since sin and duty, truth and error have struggled in the moral world, and that both with respect to the inward and outward man, wherein sometimes Israel, and sometimes Amal & prevails.—But it has been an epidemical evil in almost every age, that whenever any person or society of men, began to make
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any conscience, progress or degree in testifying against the sins and defections of the time wherein they existed, that they could be characterized by the generation, (and even by some of those who are none of the most irreligious) as men of strife, contention or divisive courses. This is no new thing: says the prophet, when he had been declaring the truth unto an apostate generation,—*Woes me, my mother, that thou hast born me a man of strife and contention unto the whole earth.* But

2. Let it be supposed, that there should be any such troublesome persons in these societies, who raise needless feuds and disorders, the fault is in the members, and not in the duty itself when rightly managed. This must hold good in all other lawful assemblies, whether civil or religious, as well as these meetings, and grant that there is or has been in these meetings (particularly correspondent and congregational meetings) still some person or other aspiring to have the lead in every argument, motion, vote or proposition; which sometimes has created no small disorder: Yet as this oftentimes proceeds from pride and ambition, or at best from fiery zeal, or to hear themselves speak or argue for arguments sake, or rather banter, (which is worse) these must rather be accounted a pest or burden than a blessing or benefit unto any well regulated society:—*offence must come, (says the great instituter of all ordinances) but woe unto him by whom it cometh.* The

III. And last objection that I shall observe, and it has also been made by some of those men which must needs now occupy the places of teachers: viz. *These meetings are no ways needful or necessary, excepting unto those called mountain-men, when they want preaching.* Unto this I may answer,

1. That indeed this is no improper exercise for people, when destitute of public ordinances, (of which the following register is a pregnant proof) but does this exempt others who daily enjoy gospel-ordinances from an obligation to this duty? Surely no. The apostle enjoins us *to exhort one another,—to comfort one another,—to edify one another,—to teach and admonish one another,—to receive one another,—to be subject to one another,—to confess their sins to one another,—to minister their gifts to one another,—and to serve one another in love**: and how can they

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* Heb. iii. 13. 1 Theff. v. 11. Col. iii. 16. Rom. xv. 7. Eph. v. 21. James v. 16. 1 Pet. iv. 10. Gal. v. 13.

do this without an opportunity for that purpose? and however some explain some of these texts according to their own notion in opposition to this duty; yet sure they can never be wholly restricted either to family worship, or yet public ordinances. And granting that it is the duty of families, why not of a number of families met together, and a number of these societies unto the same exercises of duty? and this makes nothing at all against the sixth and seventh direction in our directory for worship, (as they foolishly would suppose) providing that the one duty do not retard or juggle out the other. — And for public church-meetings, where have they the opportunity to administer these gifts unto one another, except they turn Quakers? According to the divine injunction, a woman is not to speak in the church: But here the apostle makes no distinction; nay, we are told in the forecited text, Acts i. 17. *That these all continued with one accord in prayer with the women* †. And

Lastly,

† Here a question may arise, Whether women may be sustained as constitute members in society meetings? and if so, whether they ought to meet apart or with men in a promiscuous manner? — But as this point has been somewhat controverted, it will be as safe to give in substance the mind of a very judicious writer, designed Timotheus Philadelphus, but said to be Mr. Brown of Wamphray, in a pretty large manuscript, intitled, — “The divine right of the meetings of the Lord’s people, &c.” in which he says,

“*Lastly,* You may associate in these meetings with Christian women; for these are Christians as well as men are; and so the common Christian duties which are competent to these meetings; do belong to them; as also they had need to have these duties performed towards them, as well as men; and rather more, seeing they are the weaker vessels, and so temptations and sad dispensations are the more ready to seize upon them. And further, the blessings promised and bestowed on these meetings; and such as constantly frequent them, do belong to both sexes. In a word, all the foregoing arguments brought in, for proving the lawfulness of these meetings, it concludes in favour of women’s being members and actors in these meetings. In the old Testament, see Esther in the palace of Ahasuerus, Esther iv. As also Job xlii. 11. there was a meeting in which Job’s sisters, as well as others, were present; and by the daughters in the Song are meant weak saints, whether men or women in these private meetings. — And these spoken of Mal. iii. 10. must include women as well as men. And if we come to the new Testament we find Mary and Elizabeth at this exercise, Luke i. and for the same purpose see Mark xvi. Luke xxii. 2. John xx. 17. &c. and so in that meeting, Acts i. 19. *These all continued in prayer with the women.* And these in the house of Mary, Acts

Lastly, To shut up the whole, the Lord has not only put a note of attention and approbation upon this duty, Mal. iii. 16.—*and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him*; but has also appended a most gracious promise of his presence unto it, Mat. xviii. 19, 20.—*If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them.—For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

AFTER what I have here observed, (and elsewhere upon the like occasion) I suppose it were needless to advance any thing as motives to enhance this publication. Only as different subjects oftentimes have different circumstances, I shall just hint to the reader,

I. That it is pretty evident, that that handful designed by the name of the United Societies have been very much traduced both before and since the revolution: before the revolution they were branded as blind zealots, schismatics, rejecters of ministry and magistracy, men of bloody and seditious principles, &c. Since the revolution their most faithful contendings have been, by some historians and others, represented as high flights and extravagances. And although somewhat has dropped from divers pens at different times in their behalf, yet sure a better vindication in their defence cannot be produced, than a publication of these very transactions for which they were so aspersed; and it would appear, that it was wrote at first with a view to this: *for wisdom*

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xii. 12. And those assembled at the river side of Philippi. And sometimes they may not only prove helpful, but in these meetings, give a lesson to an old minister or professor."

"But here it may be objected, That promiscuous meetings of men and women for private worship and mutual edification are liable to reproach, and apt to be abused, &c. To which I answer,

"I. That why meetings of men and women for such duties should be termed promiscuous, more than other meetings of worship of both sexes, for family worship, or for public ordinances or civil affairs of life are so called or reputed, I know not.—But this I know, that all meetings of men and women for whatever purposes, are apt to be, and have been abused by Satan and his instruments for sinister ends."

Here he goes on in answer to this objection with much brilliancy of argument, shewing in several particulars, what prudence should be used in women's being members of such societies:—and withal what caution should be used to prevent every ground of jealousy or suspicion, that may occasion reproach upon such a religious duty.

is justified of her children.—It is true, every thing is beautiful in its season, and perchance some may think, that after so much time is elapsed, this publication wants this peace of requisite duty. But grant this, better late than never; the Lord has assured us in his word, that he will both plead his own cause, and vindicate his witnessing church and people: But the positive time we have not prescribed; only we are sure, that it shall be either while alive, or after they are gone, *thou wilt maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.* A

2. Motive for this publication may be this; that as these two cardinal evils which they had to struggle with, *viz.* Popery and Prelacy seems to be pushing their way, and making wide strides unto these lands again; when such herds are not only warping off to the antichristian camp, but even numbers of witness-bearers seem to be losing views of their own professed testimony *in this hour and power of darkness*, let us then, by a retrospect view, trace back the footsteps of Christ's flock, and *feed our kids beside the shepherds tents.*—Indeed this crooked and insidious generation is now become weary of (what they call) controverted points of principles: these, say they, eat out the life of religion. And as the following subject bears the title of *Faithful contendings displayed*, it may be judged to bear this disagreeable face of controversy by some, and so by them be denied a hearing to answer for itself.—It is true, strife and division, the two grand parents of needless dispute and groundless animosities, always are and have been bad neighbours to religion. These, like a gangrene, have eaten out the vitals thereof. But how a faithful contending for the cause of Christ and every one of his despised truths, (which are now fallen into so much disrepute as to be controverted) can eat out the life of religion, is not so easy to determine. It must rather be feared that these gentlemen who would exchange true zeal, truth, and faithfulness for what they design charity, moderation, and liberty of conscience, (hating almost every species of contending or witness bearing) have but little real religion at bottom, for controversy to corrode upon. It commonly falls out both in respect of principle and practical religion, that those unstable souls, to whom old truths become unfavoury by such volatility, not only
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lose sight of their own profession * ; but most easily become a prey unto any whimsical notion, error and delusion whatsoever.—And hence it is that so many professors are tript, and carried off their feet at this time. Therefore if we can do no more, if we could but honestly hand down the faithful contendings of our reforming and suffering ancestors as a testimony to posterity, it might be a piece of generation service, that would yield no small comfort or peace of mind at last †. Memorable for the purpose are these words in the last speech of the last martyr that publicly suffered on a scaffold in Scotland : “ Do not grow weary (says he) to maintain, “ in your place and stations, the present testimony ; for “ when Christ goes forth to defeat antichrist, with that “ name written on his vesture, *King of Kings, and Lord “ of Lords*, he will make it glorious in the earth : And “ if ye can but transmit it to posterity ye may count it “ a great generation work : But beware of the ministers “ that have accepted of this toleration, and all others “ that bend that way ; for the Sun hath gone down upon them.”

But I know, it is objected, and perhaps will be objected, after all that I have here said, and even by some judicious persons, who, in charity, we must suppose wish well to the memory and contendings of these worthy men, *That as they were mostly private men, and these transactions partly of a private nature, and sometimes not carried on in such an agreeable way as they themselves could have wished, the publication of them must rather tend to expose them and their weakness, than to exoner them or the testimony they contended for, before this lukewarm or ludicrous generation.* Could I here advance any thing they would sustain as an answer to this, I would just observe ;

1st, That altho' these actors and transactions were mostly private men and private matters ; yet in so far as both were connected in carrying on the public testimony of the day, they behoved to be of a public nature
also :

* The doubts and drifts of the voluble mind,
That here and there appear, turn judgment blind.

LITH — W.

† — The man who consecrates his hours
By vigorous efforts and an honest aim,
At once he draws the string of life and death :
He walks with nature, and her paths are peace.

The Complaint, night second.

also: and would it be accounted fair play to omit the one, that the other might be concealed?

2dly, As several of these transactions are already hinted at in the Hind let loose,—Informatory vindication, Renwick's large life and letters, this must rather be a publishing the original, than offering what is intirely new unto the public.—And tho' we are not to judge of matters, nor steer our course always by the needle of providence in the compass of actions; yet I might ask for what end the original manuscript has been hitherto preserved, if for no use to the public?

3dly, Whatever divisions or things disagreeable fell in amongst them, it but only shews they were but men subject unto *the like passions with others*; and tho' they were but private men, yet I might refer it to the unbiased reader, whether any thing he finds here of this nature, be not less than what has fallen out in learned church judicatories particularly since the revolution. And

Lastly, For their other faults and failings, they were but men and willing (at least to the year 1688) to have them corrected †, and would it not bear hard upon any history, nay on scripture itself, to say, it were better they had never been published, because the faults and failings of the penman, or the persons therein notified, are therein related or recorded.—Nay, bear with me, if I should say, that this is one of the proper uses of all history, sacred or profane; for by this important lesson we may, for the conduct of life, learn what was imitable in the persons and actions therein narrated, and at the same time with caution avoid the rocks upon which they split or suffered shipwreck, and so by guarding against the errors, follies and mistakes of past times, we may be rendered wiser

† For instance, the engagement to secrecy which they entered into on account of the publishing the Lanerk declaration; which was the most exceptionable thing of a private nature, was by them laid aside as soon as they discovered the evil consequences thereof; which was no more nor less than what our Reformers did with several things fallen into at the beginning of the reformation, but laid aside afterwards. And for that word to be used by the wanderers mentioned, P. 64. let none think it was in imitation of the Mason word; no, it was only to be used for a time to prevent their being circumvented by false friends or open enemies; a notable instance we have of the taking of Mr. King, who was betrayed by two of the enemy in disguise of two of the sufferers. Had this word been then and there used, his apprehending at that time (God willing) might happily have been prevented.

wiser by the experience, and at the expence of former ages. Very pertinent for this, are a few words near the end of the life of Robert Garnock, (wrote by himself while in prison, and yet in manuscript) who was executed at the Gallowee of Edinburgh, Oct. ---, 1631.—

“ Now, for any thing I know, I will be tortured, and
 “ my life taken, and so will get no more written. So,
 “ any that read it, I beg of them, to shun all that is evil
 “ of my life, as they would shun hell; and if there be
 “ any thing in it that is for use, I request the Lord that
 “ he may bear it home upon them when I am gone, and
 “ make it thus usefull for them that read it, &c.”

ALL I observe in the last place, anent the way and manner of this publication, is, that as Mr. Shields broke off somewhat abruptly with a paper that was to be given in by each person to their ministers at their accession to the revolution church, it was found necessary to add a short appendix, shewing upon what footing the more faithful party stood their ground at and since that time.—As to the stile of language, it is much the same with the original copy: Only as there were some words superfluous and some papers of lesser note, somewhat prolix: it was found proper to abridge them a little, as concisely as possible; in lieu of which, some letters and other papers more momentuous have been added, and put in their proper places, which had been at first omitted with a few foot notes for the explanation of the subject and all to render it as commodious to the reader, as possible: and whoever suspects the transcription either of the register or appendix to be otherways vitiated from the genuine copies, may be satisfied with a sight of the autographs from which they were transcribed.

AND now for a final conclusion, may the angel of the covenant, he who guided his Israel of old with a pillar of cloud by day and a *flaming fire by night*, guide all his own professing people in this dark and cloudy day, wherein the night of our defections grows darker and darker, and the Jordan of our difficulties deeper and deeper:—And as the church of Christ in these Isles, has now of a long time dwelt with the daughter of Babylon, with that cruel yoke of bondage wreathed about her neck, may the time to favour our Zion come, *yea, the set time*, when antichrist that man of sin, and all the supporters and abettors of the kingdom of darkness, may be brought down and destroyed, with a revival of the decayed power
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of true practical religion and godliness, and a covenanted work of reformation, *that our captivity may be returned as streams in the south.*

AND if the following sheets complexly, shall, thro' the divine operation of the spirit, prove conducive in the least, to any of the foresaid purposes, that is, either to the advantage of true and real religion, or the gaining of friends unto, or confining them in the covenanted interest, in a subserviency to God's glory and the good of his church; then I dare say, the principal end is gained.— For that God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ who himself before Pontius Pilate *witnessed a good confession*, may stir up and enable many to witness and contend for the whole of his disputed truths in these once covenanted but now degenerate isles of the sea, Britain and Ireland, *that glory may dwell in our land*, is, and ought to be the earnest desire; judicious reader, of one who remains, as formerly, thy well-wisher in the truth,

JOHN HOWIE.

LOCHGOIN, Sept. 27th, 1780.

E R R A T A.

Page 16. Line 8. for *General Meeceting*, read *a General Meeting*. p. 218. last line, for *could see*, r. *could not see*. p. 225. l. 15 & 20. for *Trierminion* r. *Frierminion*, and foot note, l. 1. same page, for *ordon* r. *Gordon*, p. 241. foot note, last line, for *count* r. *account*. Perhaps there are some others which we hope the reader will notice and excuse.

ERRATA of the SERMONS.

Page 2. of the preface in the foot note, l. 6. for 1687. r. 1681.
 Page 3. foot note, line 6. for *requiring* r. *receiving*, p. 5. l. 11. for *his behalf* r. *his and their behalf*, p. 18. foot note, l. 4. for *desore* r. *before*, p. 40. l. 5. from the foot for *wree* r. *were*. p. 44. l. 22. for *served* r. *forwed*, p. 66. l. 1. for *ife* r. *life*, p. 68. l. 7. for *them* r. *me*, p. 112. last line, for xxiv r. xxii, p. 126. l. 28. for *sau* r. *E.sau*.

INTRODUCTION.

AS the Lord hath made his glorious attributes of mercy, power, and wisdom, to shine brightly in the behalf, and for the good of his church and people in all ages, to his glory, and their comfort, and to the confounding of all his and their enemies; so he hath made the same to appear, in as eminent and splendid a manner, in, and to, and for the church of *Scotland*, as to any other. Very early, not long after our Lord's ascension, he prevented this land with mercy, in making the light of his glorious gospel to shine in it, when many, and these far mightier and richer nations, remained in darkness, and in the shadow of death. And when it was overspread with gross Antichristian darkness, and that for a long time, he manifested his love to it, by making the light of the gospel again to arise, which as a clear sun-shine day, after so long and so dark a night, tended to the discovery of all the errors and idolatries of the man of sin, which were at the very beginning of the Reformation abandoned: So that it was among the first of the nations that did hate the whore, and shake off her yoke. And many times since, he hath remembered mercy in wrath, and hath evidenced his love to his people when they could expect nothing (looking upon their own deserts) but to feel the effects of his holy anger; also, when his people have been weak and ready to faint under the pressure of heavy burdens, and their enemies many, and strong, then hath he shown his power, either in supporting them under these burdens, or else removing the same off their backs, and scattering and overcoming their enemies: Likewise when they have been involved, or near to be involved in terrible-like difficulties, out of which they could see no way to extricate themselves, he hath made his wisdom to appear in their behalf, either in
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leading them (as he does the blind in ways they know not) by these difficulties, or else in paving to them a passage through the same. So that as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, the Lord's holy attributes, as so many high and impregnable mountains have been round about the church of Scotland, loving, and not leaving, helping and preserving, strengthening and comforting her. Her privileges have been great, singular, and many; for no church under the New Testament dispensation hath had greater gospel light, nor hath attained unto such a reformation, not only from Heathenism, which she attained unto even at the first planting of the gospel among the nations, but also from Romish idolatries, after the gospel light had risen again in our dark horizon, even more and purer than any of her sister churches, though they had casten off the same yoke; and not only so, but from Prelacy and Erastianism; and was brought into the strictest and solemnest of covenants, that ever a people came under: and although she has never wanted enemies, and these oftentimes very formidable, many and mighty, to contend with, and wrestle against, yet all along through every period, she hath had valiant champions for truth, even when fallen in the streets, and faithful and zealous contenders for the liberties and privileges Christ her Head and King had endowed and endowed her with; so that from the first beginning of the Reformation from Antichristian darkness, until this very time, there hath been a constant testimony for Christ carried on, and kept up, though sometimes it hath had more, and sometimes fewer owners, and avouchers thereof, yet as one link of a chain depends upon another, so it hath done, and hath been preserved unbroken, or uncut off to this day. But as great sins and multiplied transgressions, after great light, and multiplied mercies, are very provoking to the Lord, to bring on a people guilty of the same, sore judgments, and terrible desolating strokes; so the mentioning of our many and manifold mercies, and great and gracious privileges, should be so far from puffing us up, that they should humble us, and lay us low, even in the dust. And as the remembrance of what once we were, and from whence we are fallen, should fill our hearts with sorrow; so the consideration of what we are now, and the fears of what we may meet with, if repentance prevent it not, should fill our eyes with tears. *We may take up a bitter lamentation, and say, How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people*

ple? *How is she become a widow that was great among the nations and princes among the provinces? How is she become tributary?* Alas! our crown is fallen from our head, wo unto us that we have sinned. We that were once the head, are now become the tail. As there is a cloud of darkness, and deadness this day over the face of all the reformed churches; so in a particular manner, Scotland hath a great share of the same, and the cloud is so thick that our prayers cannot pass through. It hath been a long, weary, and dark night, and it yet continues a night of persecution, division and desertion, as the punishment of our defection and apostacy.

WHEN the glorious work of Reformation which was built at the expence of so much pains and labour, prayer, tears and blood, was overturned and broken down, these solemn covenants broken and burnt, Christ's ministers ejected, and hirelings put in their room, and abjured Prelacy established, and the supremacy over the church (only proper to Christ as Mediator) settled upon the head of a monster; it might have been expected that this would have been the height of the nations revolt from the Lord, and that here they would stand. But Oh! these who had broken the bonds of a sacred covenant, and cast away these cords from them, and had proven so perfidious and treacherous to God and man, could not be thought to have any tie upon them to restrain them from running the greatest length in wickedness that ever mortals arrived at; so the generality of the bulk and body of the nation hath gone on in a continued course of rebellion against the Lord, and from one degree of backsliding unto another, until now they are near the borders of Babylon; yet notwithstanding this dreadful and almost universal apostacy, since the last fatal and fearful Revolution, even in the beginning thereof, the Lord preserved a remnant of faithful ministers and professors from saying a confederacy, and going along with these iniquous courses: though their witness and testimony was not so public as afterward it was, yet at Pentland there was a party who openly owned his cause and covenant: But for the punishment of former sins, and for future trial, they fell before their enemies, many of whom were murdered both in fields and on scaffolds. Albeit this stroke was both fore and deep, yet the wound thereof in a few years thereafter was near healed, and the dirt thereof almost forgotten: for not-

withstanding the enemies cruelty and craft, to root out the followers of Christ, and bury their testimonies for him, yet the banner of the gospel was more displayed than formerly, by many faithful standard-bearers, and that in the open fields, whereunto all had access, and followed in great multitudes, which, though the same was threatened and interdicted by men, under severe penalties, yet it was blessed and countenanced of the Lord, to the conviction and conversion, edification, comfort and confirmation of many souls. But as it is usual for such a calm, not to be long without a storm, and such a shining blink of the gospel, without a dark cloud obstructing the same; so it was then, for the Lord's people being necessitate to make use of defensive arms, it pleased the holy Lord (who does all things well and wisely, in faithfulness and truth, and his people will be made to see and say so, though in the time of their meeting with cross dispensations they be ready to cry out, why is it thus) to deliver them up to the devouring sword of a cruel and bloody enemy at Bothwel-bridge June 22d, 1679. Then there was a dark cloud spread over us, or rather a dark night: This was a time of darkness and gloominess, of rebuke and blasphemy: After this defeat the case of the land was lamentably sad, enemies rejoiced, triumphed, and set up their trophies of victory, as if having taken and killed many of Christ's followers, his cause had been buried without hope of its rising again: The hands of ministers and professors became weak and their hearts faint; the edge of their zeal was blunted, and love grew cold; much bowing, yielding, tampering and complying with the bloody enemies; ministers quite left preaching in the fields, formerly much countenanced of the Lord, and many of them complied with the enemies, for favours granted by them, after they had murdered many of the saints both in fields and on scaffolds; thus it was with the land: But the Lord, who is always mindful of his people in their low condition, and will not suffer his work to be without a witness, raised up a fitted and worthy instrument, Mr. Richard Cameron, who came from Holland, and went boldly to the open fields, and faithfully preached the gospel, setting the trumpet to his mouth, freely giving warning of the sins and snares, duties and dangers of the time, with whom the Lord stirred up a faithful and fruitful minister, Mr. Donald Cargill to join; the seals of both their ministry, are yet upon the hearts of many; yet the Lord for holy
and

land wise ends saw it fit to remove them from us: Mr. Richard Cameron was killed at Air's-moss, and Mr. Donald Cargill suffered at the cross of Edinburgh, both, willingly and chearfully sealing these truths with their blood at death, which they had professed and preached in their life: After whose death, the case of the land was deplorable, yea more than it was after Bothwel for now had ministers given over all public preaching, except in some private chambers, notwithstanding the many reiterated and pressing calls of the people, so that one might have wandered from sea to sea, and not have gotten the benefit of the faithfully and freely preached gospel. Sin, snares and temptations abounded, defections increased, and confusions grew; many serious seekers and lovers of Christ, began to languish in discouragement, and to sigh and droop in dispondency; the enemy raged, and threatened the ruin of all that was undeftroyed: the generality of the people were involved in the defections, compliances, sins, and snares of the time, so that the testimony of Christ was like to be quite buried: but the holy and gracious God, who many a time hath remembered mercy to his people in wrath, and made the time of their extremity, his opportunity of manifesting himself for their help and encouragement, in his great love and condescendency, preserved a remnant, in some measure; free of these public sins and defections that the generality were involved in at the time, or else in mercy brought them off from backslidden courses, who did embody themselves in societies for prayer and conference; and though they were united and joint in the testimony of the day, which was for the prerogatives of Christ, the privileges of his church, and the liberties of mankind, and against, not only tyranny upon the one hand, but also defection upon the other: yet being scattered up and down the country, they could not have access to know one another's minds, in order to the communicating of mutual help, counsel and encouragement to one another in that sad and weary day, that they might the better, and the more unanimously keep up that noble testimony in their station and capacity: However providence opened a door for this, which at the time, and since, hath been blessed to the helping to strengthen the things that remained, that were ready to die: The occasion of which was this.

THE day after the death of that famous and faithful minister and martyr Mr. Donald Cargill, July 28th, 1681. a Parliament did convene at Edinburgh, in which the duke of York did preside as Commissioner, for the then disowned tyrant, Charles II. wherein were several wicked laws enacted, especially that blasphemous and self-contradictory Test, ordained to be taken by all persons in public trust; against which, some of the seriously, and zealously godly in the West, did look upon it as their indispensable duty to give some public testimony, some way corresponding to the notoriety of the sin, as in their capacity they could attain to, lest their deficiency in this, might have made them interpretatively to be looked upon as consenters to, or at least connivers at such a wickedness; and that the same might be helpful for handing down the testimony to posterity: But desiring that the same might be done by the advice, consent, and concurrence of as many as could be obtained, they endeavoured to acquaint all in every place of the nation, whom they heard owned and adhered to the testimony against tyranny and defection, as left stated by the two ministers who had lately sealed the same with their blood, to the end that some from all these respective places might convene at a time and place appointed, for mutual unanimous consultation, deliberation and help, in going about that affair: and for settling a correspondency thereafter amongst them. Thus was the rise, and this gave the occasion to the first general meeting, which from time to time, hath since continued to be kept. But because these meetings have been so much talked of, and spoken against, both at home and abroad, and represented as Erastian Assemblies, treating of church and state affairs; I shall therefore fairly and ingenuously give a true relation of all the conclusions (of any consequence) that have been resolved upon at these meetings from the first of them, to the very last (I having access to be present at most of them, and so cannot but be judged to have opportunity to know what was resolved and concluded therein) Though doubtless a better order and method in managing affairs, had been desirable, and some things are liable to be mistaken, as no wonder there was not more, considering the time's darkness and confusions, and the weakness of the managers, some of whom had more zeal than knowledge, more honesty than policy, and more single-hearted simplicity than prudence; yet the unbiassed and unprejudiced may discover much ingenuity

nuity, and somewhat of the Lord's conduct, and helping them to manage and keep up the testimony according to their capacities, and stations in these meetings.

IN the prosecuting of this undertaking, I shall first give some short hint of the state of the country every time these meetings occurred, especially how it was with that persecuted party at each of these times; what persecution they were meeting with from the avowed and bloody enemy, and contradiction, opposition and reproach from persons, and parties on either hand, with some brief account of what contendings and wrestlings they had with them, with some declining to the left hand by defection, and with others upon the right hand running to unwarrantable extravagancies; which in some measure will help to demonstrate what gave occasion and rise to that persecuted party, to fall upon such resolutions in these meetings, for their own vindication, but especially for the vindication of the cause by them owned, from calumnies and reproaches, for keeping up the testimony, and for preserving peace and unity among themselves. And in the next place I shall give a true relation of the resolutions themselves which were concluded at every one of the meetings; with what gave the occasion to every one of the same: And also some account of the effects following thereupon. The perusing of which though it may be humbling, seeing thereby our low condition may be evident, when so noble a cause hath such weak managers: yet the same will not be unpleasant to look over, for in it may be seen some resolutions fallen upon, and also put in practice, which might have taken heads more wise to contrive, and hands more strong to perform, than those who were helped to do both.

BEFORE I begin with this relation, I shall premise a few things which I desire may be seriously considered, and soberly pondered, hoping they may have some weight with the unbiaſſed.

1/ſ, These meetings were, and are looked upon by the United Societies (though it cannot be denied but some persons, especially at the first frequenting of them, thro' rashness, inconsideration and ignorance, vented themselves in some things to the contrary, but the miscarriages of two or three persons cannot be justly charged upon the whole) neither as civil nor ecclesiastic judicatories; but

but of the same nature with particular Christian societies, gathered together in their general correspondencies, in the time of extreme persecution, by mutual advice and common consent, endeavouring jointly to know the sins and duties of the day, that so they might be helpful and encouraging to one another in concluding what was necessary for their preservation, and the propagation of the testimony, according to the word of God, the law of nature, and the fundamental constitutions and laudable practices of this antient covenanted church and nation of SCOTLAND, acting jointly and harmoniously by way of consultation, deliberation and admonition.

2dly, These resolutions, consented unto, and agreed upon by these present at the meeting, representing the society or societies they were sent from, though they neither were, nor are looked upon as formal statutes of either civil or ecclesiastic judicatories, yet they were understood to be of an obliging force upon all who were consenters, partly by reason of the nature of the thing, and partly by virtue of their consent; but no ways obtruding the same, as extending over the whole land, because coming from us, tho' there lieth upon them also a moral obligation to perform such necessary duties.

3dly, At the time when these meetings were first frequented, it could not be expected that such order was in them as could have been wished, seeing the darkness and confusions of the time were great, and the weakness of those present at them not small, nor their opposition from all hands despicable; yet by degrees they afterward attained to a more exact method in managing of matters. And though the word *Convention*, at first was used to distinguish these meetings by, and some resolutions therein concluded, may at first view, seem to favour of authority; yet as the same is not to be understood in that sense, which the strict acceptation of the word may import, so the Christian charity and brotherly love of any not too rigidly censorious will cover the same, imputing it to weakness, seeing whenever they came to see such things, or any other to be wrong or offensive, they did forbear them and reform.

4thly, Though the word *Preses* was, and may be used still, yet that is not to be understood of one having authority, but only of one for order, and avoiding of confusion in the meeting; and the word *Commissioner* or *Commissioners*, yet they are not to be looked upon as persons clothed with authority, to act judicially in the meet-
ing

ing they are delegate unto, but only as persons representing the respective societies they were sent from, that at the meeting with their brethren, they might unanimously consent and conclude upon what was incumbent and necessary for them; and that when they went home, they might acquaint the society which sent them, with what pass'd at these meetings.

5thly, Though those who will be at the pains to read over this account, may see some resolutions concluded on at these meetings, which had small, or no effects following upon the same, yet this need not be thought strange, if it be considered that as sometimes dispensations may fall out, betwixt the falling upon the conclusions, and the performance of what was concluded or resolved upon, (which at the time of the resolution was not thought upon) that may be the cause of counting it expedient to alter the same; and the want of ability may hinder the performance of what was intended: So the resolutions complied unto, and agreed upon at these meetings, are to be looked upon, not so much what they did, as what they were willing to do, in their station, for the advantage of the cause, if opportunity and ability had corresponded to their desire: However they cannot be altogether freed from forgetfulness and laziness, things incident to them as well as others.

Having premised these things, I shall give the relation of what I promised.

THE first of these General Meetings was kept upon the 15th of December, 1681, at the Logan house, in the parish of Lismahagow and shire of Clidisdale. Before, or at which time, the condition of the country was lamentable, the cruelty and malice of the enemy was come to a great height; they were pressing conformity to their iniquitous courses, and alas! they were much complied with. Defection was growing, sin was abounding, and the love of many was waxing cold, snares and temptations were increasing; and which was sad, people wanted faithful warning of the sin and danger of the time, for ministers (as if change of dispensations could give a discharge from indispenible duty) were lying by from the public preaching of the gospel, and did not (as becomes watchmen) set the trumpet to their mouth, to give a certain sound of what was duty and what was sin, in such

a time of great danger and extreme necessity : But especially the case of the scattered, reproached, persecuted, and yet contending party was sad; for upon the one hand enemies rage was keen against them, so that they were reduced to very great straits, of hiding, chafing, wandering, imprisonment and killing : So upon the other, as the want of the faithfully preached gospel was very wounding to them, the enjoying of which in purity and power, would have been refreshing, encouraging and watering to them in their weary wilderness condition : So the sad reproaches and odious calumnies, particularly being of Gib's principles, which were cast upon them by many, especially by some ministers and professors, was not easy to bear. Notwithstanding of which, and many more discouragements, the foresaid day and place, A meeting did convene, consisting of persons sent from several societies up and down the country, who owned and adhered to the Testimony of the day. The occasion of which meeting, is a little hinted above; in short, it was this : To consider about, and determine upon giving a Public Testimony against the *wicked* acts of the late *Parliament*, especially that wretched Test, and for settling a correspondence thereafter among all them of one judgment in owning the testimony. - After they were met, and prayer ended, it was thought convenient that a certain number should be chosen out of the whole, for the more speedy and easy resolving upon what they were met about; which being done, the first thing they did, in reference to the making of any conclusion, was the revising and rectifying of an Act and Declaration, (the form whereof being drawn up before) wherein, after they have related how the late deceased tyrant, Charles the II, was legally cast off by the *Declaration* published at *Sanquhar*, they give reasons of their revolt from, and disowning of his authority; and in the end they shew their adherence to the Rutherglen and Sanquhar declarations. So they declare against whatever hath been done by Charles Stuart and his accomplices, in prejudice to our antient laws and liberties, in all his several pretended parliaments since the year 1660, and particularly the late parliament holden at Edinburgh, *July 28, 1681*, by a Commissioner professedly Popish, and for villainy exiled his native land, with all the acts therein enacted; as that abominable, ridiculous, unparalleled, and soul-perjuring Test, and the rest. After this was done, the same was publicly read in the audience of all present at the meeting, and

their judgment required of, and their consent sought unto it, which was cheerfully obtained; so that it was resolved that the same should be published at Lanerk, upon the 12th of *January* 1682, and some horse and foot to do the same. That which gave the occasion to the consulting and resolving upon the publishing of this Testimony, is a little mentioned above, and the doing thereof in such a public manner was necessary, seeing thereby they evidenced their zeal for the cause wronged by these wicked laws, their fear of partaking of other mens sins, lest they should partake of their judgments also; their desire to have the conviction of the heinousness of the sins witnessed against fastened upon the consciences of the contrivers, actors, and compliers with the same; and to cast a fair copy to posterity, if the like necessity calling for the same should occur; as they had got many notable instances of the like, from their predecessors of worthy memory. Though what followed upon this so necessary a duty, be matter of mourning, yet not in the least to make the lawfulness or expediency thereof to be called in question. As upon the one hand, when the cruel adversary, angry that there should be any in the land, evidencing their love and loyalty to Christ, and zeal against the wrongs done to him, his cause and interest, heard of the publishing of this Testimony, to shew their indignation against the same, they caused the (so called) magistrates of Edinburgh to erect a stage at the cross, and there *in their robes*, (by the hand of the hangman) solemnly to burn the Declaration published at Lanerk, and with it the Solemn League and Covenant, upon which they said, (in a paper they printed) that the Declaration was founded; and fined the town of Lanerk in 6000 Merks, because they did not hinder the publishing of it, although it was not in their power to do the same. So upon the other hand, though it made the cause owned by the publishers more clear to some, yet many ministers and professors condemned it, even for disowning the authority of the *Tyrant* by such a party, as well as for some expressions in it, as *Convention of Estates, In our name and authority*, &c. which were indeed not well worded, and unadvisedly put in, the defence of which was afterward past from, as it is to be seen in their *Informatory Vindication*.

A second thing resolved upon, was the agreeing upon and settling a General Correspondence to run circular through the whole societies of the nation owning the

Testimony, every fourteen days, or at least every month. This conclusion was thought very rational and necessary, for the speedy knowing of one another's minds about any matter in agitation among them, and communicating their thoughts to one another for counsel and direction, how to carry, in and about the same, and for avoiding of confusion and preserving of union. And as the design of agreeing upon this conclusion was very rational, so what hath followed upon the same, hath tended to the advantage of the cause and encouragement of its owners, for it hath produced this effect: Where there were several societies in a shire, they have endeavoured to keep up a correspondence among themselves by one or two persons sent from every society in the shire, to a place, and at a time appointed, especially presently before, and presently after every General Meeting, for consulting and determining matters relative to one or more of the Societies in the bounds, and for removing of differences among any of them, which was incumbent for them to do in their station. These are called shire meetings; and sometimes two or three shires do so correspond: And when the shire is large, and many societies in it, they divide such meetings in two, and meet together but upon some emergencies more than ordinary: But what things cannot be brought to any conclusion therein, and these matters more public, and which require the advice, concurrence and consent of the whole, were, and are brought to the General Meeting, that there it might be considered, and some conclusion put thereto, as was proper for them to do, according to their station and capacity. And this method continues unto this day.

Further, it was concluded that every quarter of a year thereafter there should be a General Meeting of persons to be sent from all the societies in every shire, burgh, and corner of the nation, where they resided who owned the Testimony. To resolve upon this conclusion, was one cause of the convening of their meeting, which was looked upon as helpful to propagate the Testimony, to preserve unity among its owners, and to strengthen and encourage one another in the way of their duty in that dark, sad and weary day. And though many have been pleased from ignorance or prejudice to exclaim against these meetings, and consequently against this conclusion of the first of them, yet what effects the same hath produced, answerable to the ends of their first appointment, the

following account of the subsequent meetings will demonstrate.

Likewise, it was concluded, that nothing should be done by any particular person, without the consent of the society whereof he was a member, in things whereof their knowledge and consent was requisite to be had. And also, that nothing should be done by any society, or societies in a shire, in matters relative to the public, and which concerned the whole, without the knowledge and consent of the General Meeting. That which made them fall upon this resolution, was the fears that persons or societies, (having more zeal than knowledge) might run and rush upon things at their own hand, doing them in name of the whole, and yet without their knowledge and consent, which though even right upon the matter, yet wanting the concurrence of these as much concerned, if not more than they, cannot be reckoned their deed; And if wrong both as to matter and manner, the whole would be blamed; yea the cause would suffer more reproach, seeing in a community it is ordinary to find some persons rash and precipitant in meddling with matters beyond their sphere; Especially there was ground for this fear, in that confused and dark time, for seeking to prevent which they cannot be justly blamed. And as the conclusion was, and is rational, and necessary for that end, especially among a community which desires and designs to do nothing relative to the public, and which concerns the whole, without the knowledge, concurrence and consent of all these concerned; so the same hath proved effectual for keeping of union, excluding of confusion, hedging in of petulant spirits, and right managing of affairs, though several have been pleased to cry out against it as an imposition, especially some who have broken off from them: But as they have explained their meaning in other things, so also in this, as may be seen in their *Informatory Vindication*, P. 46, 47.

Moreover it was concluded, That each commissioner there present, should after his return to the society he was sent from, consult with, and seek their advice, if they judged it necessary, that some person or persons should be sent abroad to foreign reformed churches, for making known to them the sad condition of this church, and in particular their own low and lamentable case; and to come resolved to the next meeting, as to the way and manner of carrying it on. Tho' some effects which followed upon this resolution, were discouraging, as shall be

be shewn hereafter; yet that which made them fall upon it was reasonable, for as this church in general was in a very sad case being broken with persecution, wounded with division, and like to be ruined with defection, and so stood in need of the help and sympathy of other churches; so in particular that party being members thereof, their condition was not the least deplorable, being sorely persecuted by the common enemy; and sadly reproached, wrongfully represented, and calumnies cast upon them by many of their declining brethren; as that they were running upon wild extravagancies, particularly that they were of Gib's principles, which were spread not only in this land, but also in the neighbouring and foreign churches. Therefore to clear themselves of these things, and especially to vindicate the cause owned by them, and also to obtain (being become as aliens to their mother's children) the sympathy of strangers, they judged it expedient that the societies should take it to their consideration, whether it were necessary to send one or more of their number, in good repute among them, and in some capacity for managing such an undertaking.

It was also resolved, that the 29th of December, next, should be observed by all the societies adhering to the Testimony, and united in that Correspondence, as a day of fasting and prayer unto the Lord, that he would be graciously pleased in mercy, to direct, countenance and bless the action which was to be gone about upon the 12th of January, 1682. This action was the publishing of the Declaration at Lanerk. And that the said 12th of January be observed as a day of fasting and prayer by all that should remain at home, in their several societies, and that the 26th of January, and 19th of February, be observed days of fasting and humiliation, prayer and thanksgiving, by the said societies. And the next general meeting was appointed to be upon the 15th of March at the Priest's-hill.

Having given this account of the conclusions of this meeting with what gave the occasion to, and followed thereupon: I shall next give the relation of this one thing, which, though it seem to reflect upon these who had any hand in it, yet I could not omit it, seeing it would be reckoned dissingenuity in relating the laudable deeds of a person or party, not to give some account of their miscarriages also: especially these which are not only nottour to others, but also confessed to be such by themselves:

as this was. But because I study brevity, as well as impartiality, I shall give it in few words. There was one engagement unto secrecy taken by the members of this meeting, the import of which was, *That they should not make known unto any, what conclusions were resolved upon at the time, but upon the like engagement.* This was thought necessary and expedient at the time, lest the then intended publishing of the Declaration, should have been discovered, and so the action impeded. But the continuing of it, at the next meeting, and so from one meeting to another, until it was jointly laid aside, was very disadvantageous to the cause, and perplexing to many of the owners thereof; for some of tender consciences scrupled to acquaint persons (who either wanted clearness to take the engagement, or else it was thought fit not to tender it to them) with matters, even when the good of the cause was concerned in it, and so it was made a bond of iniquity: And others not minding what bonds were upon them by reason of the same, and from an itching humour, which is in many to tell things, became guilty of perjury, by being too lax in it.

After this meeting the case of the land was deplorably sad, as it was before it. Enemies went still on in pressing conformity to their hellish courses, getting ready compliance thereunto, by the generality of people, and persecuting all recusants with rigour. But especially the case of the witnessing party was much to be pitied, for upon the one hand, the adversary after the publishing of Lanerk Declaration breathed out cruelty and slaughter against them, some effects of whose fury is touched a little above. And upon the other hand, instead of compassion and sympathy, which might have been expected would have been shown them in such a sad juncture, many of their covenanted brethren did not only condemn some words in the declaration, as convention &c. but also the thing itself, as coming from such a party, who, they then concluded was running upon unwarrantable and unhappy courses, and were represented as such, both at home and abroad. Although these things were wounding and weighty to them, yet they did nothing abate, but rather kindle their zeal; they were more diligent than formerly, in keeping up their meetings for prayer and conference, and their desire was more fervent to promote the Testimony, and transmit it to posterity; for the settling of the Correspondence,
and

and the publishing of the Declaration, was a little reviving to them in their bondage, a pledge that the Lord would do more for them, and a branch of hope reached to them, in that their low condition. But their great complaint was the want of the faithfully preached gospel which they longed after.

However, according to the appointment of the last general meeting did convene at the Priest-hill, in the parish of Muir-kirk of Kyle, and Sheriffdom of Air, upon the 15th of March 1682. After they were met, and prayer ended, this meeting (but especially afterward, method being attained by degrees, and not at the first) for order's sake was thus modelled; when it was known who were these sent from the several societies (there being always more there than such) there was chosen of these sixteen, and sometimes more, to make up which number, every shire choosed some more, and some fewer, according to the number of societies therein, and where there was but one out of a shire, he *was always* of that number. Again out of these was chosen a Præses, not that to him was given (neither did they claim) any power or authority, over the rest, but for keeping of order, and avoiding of confusion, which was very incident among such a company. Sometimes the rest of the Commissioners were desired to go to another place, and spend the time in prayer; but what conclusions were requisite for them to know and obtain their consent unto, were signified to them, that they might acquaint their societies therewith when they went home; or if they had any thing to object, they might give it in; at other times they were present, that they might see and hear what past, and speak their mind, when they saw it necessary, that so they might the better give an account thereof when they went home to their societies.

Next when this was done, there were some questions enquired at every one of the selected number; such as, If they knew the mind of the society they were sent from? If they did, whether their society owned the Testimony against tyranny and defection? if they were free of scandal? as also if any there present, knew any of the rest, chargeable with such things? And if any were found so chargeable; they were in all sobriety desired to withdraw, but not to be offended, seeing what they did was out of love to them, and for their own exoneration, to manifest their hatred at the sin, and sense of the justness of the censure to be inflicted for such scandals by these

these who were competent for the same. This method hath been still followed. And about two years after this, these questions were written, which I shall insert when I come to the time in which the same was done. And albeit, *this hath* been exclaimed against by many, and called by some cannons; yet the same was, and is thought necessary, seeing, at the first beginning of these meetings, and since, many people were sadly involved, and insnared in the public defections, and gross compliances of the time; which would have been found censurable by church judicatories, in a peaceable and settled condition of the church, and in this confused and broken time, wanting such judicatories to make application unto (however being willing to retain the sense of the justness of the censure, which should be inflicted upon the persons guilty of public scandal.) Therefore out of love to their brethren, and fear of partaking of other men's sins, they desired and endeavoured to have the members they concurred with in these meetings, in carrying on, and managing the Testimony in their stations, so qualified, as they might with comfort and confidence join with, being of one mind and judgment, as to the matter of the Testimony, and free of any public scandal; or if they had been chargeable with any, confessed it, were sensible of the evil thereof, and willing to acknowledge offence they had given thereby, to such as were competent to take the same. This was, nor is not a taking upon them the trial of scandals, or scandalous persons; for all the trial which they did, and do judge incumbent for them being private persons in their private capacity notwithstanding of the greatest necessity, is not judicial and authoritative, but meerly private and popular, for information about the case and practice of the persons, in order to the regulating of their consciences in their duty and carriage toward them; that so according to the judgment of discretion, they might be fully persuaded in their minds, as to what was right and wrong, true or false, and might not remain staggering or doubting in their duty toward them.

These questions being enquired, and what followed thereupon at an end; then what business they had to consult about, and to deliberate upon, came to be considered. The first thing done at the meeting, as likewise at several meetings afterwards, was the reading of the conclusions of the foregoing meeting, and it was enquired at every member, if he approved of the same.

At this meeting they did approve thereof. That which moved to this was, that in case any particular person, or society had seen since the last meeting ground of objection against any of the resolutions therein concluded, they might give them in, that so, after due consideration, if it were found necessary, such resolutions might either be altered, or quite laid aside.

Next, it was concluded by them, that the honourable *Alexander Gordon of Earlston*, attended by *John Nisbet*, should be commisionate to foreign nations, to represent their low case to the reformed churches there. And that money should be collected and brought into Edinburgh, betwixt and the 4th of April next thereafter, for helping to defray his expences in that undertaking.

The import of his commission was this:—"After
 "narrating the motives pressing to send him abroad;
 "as the low case the church of Scotland was in by per-
 "secution; and that in particular, their cause and case
 "was sadly misrepresented abroad, by the subtle dealings
 "of adversaries, whereas they declared, they neither
 "maintained, nor desired to hold any thing contrary to
 "the written word of God, their ancient laws, civil and
 "ecclesiastic, and their former work of Reformation,
 "agreeable thereto: They do concredite him faithfully
 "to inform all the Protestants, to whom he should come
 "(they desiring to know their case, in order to the sym-
 "pathising with them, and holding up their case unto
 "the Lord, as members of the same body, under Jesus
 "their Head) of their present case, principles, former
 "and latter proceedings, and that they were (through
 "grace) labouring to keep themselves clean in the way
 "of the Lord, as it had been walked in by their prede-
 "cessors, in their carrying on the noble work of Refor-
 "mation, in the several steps thereof, from Popery,
 "Prelacy, and Erastian supremacy. And it is upon
 "these heads, their sufferings were, and are stated;
 "and for the more clear and full knowledge whereof,
 "they recommended them to the information of him
 "whom they had sent, as being well seen in their affairs:
 "Humbly desiring, that what information he should
 "give, might be credited: And that what information
 "they had gotten, or might get, of their principles,
 "or practices being contrary to the scripture might not be
 "believed, the same being only false aspersions cast upon
 "them. Concluding with an intreaty to all the lovers
 "of Zion, not to slight, but to ponder deeply, the sad
 "case

“ safe they, as a part of the Protestant Interest, were re-
“ dacted unto.”

This conclusion was in pursuance of one in the former meeting, that every Commissioner there, should seek the advice of their societies about sending some abroad to reformed foreign churches, for making known to them the sad case of this church. And in a particular manner their own low case, and to come resolved about it to this meeting, which accordingly was done, and they thought the sending some abroad very rational and necessary. So at this meeting it was unanimously concluded upon; and Earlston as the man of greatest repute, and best qualified among them, was jointly pitched upon. Notwithstanding whereof within a few days after, some (especially Andrew Young, a man of no despicable parts, and one who was then seemingly zealous in promoting the Testimony, yea and cordial in this conclusion) went to Glasgow, where consulting with some friends, they dissented from this resolution, alledging, among other things that the person nominate was not fit for managing of a matter of such importance. In which dissentment joyned several societies, refusing to concur by collecting money for promoting it. And the rest being bent for the same, it occasioned no small division and contention, both by word and writ. But the conclusion was rational, and seemed necessary at the time, the reasons moving to the falling upon it, is somewhat shown above: In short, it was the endeavouring to represent the deplorable condition of this church, especially, the sad case themselves was redacted unto; and to seek the rolling away of reproaches industriously heaped upon them: and to shew the justness of their cause they were contending and suffering for, that so they might obtain that sympathy abroad, which was denied them at home. Howbeit this conclusion was dissented from and much opposed. Yet, Earlston, in April, went from this land for London with John Nisbet, where he left him, and went to the Netherlands.

Likewise it was concluded, that the Commissioners there present should acquaint and desire every man of his respective society, to provide for himself fit weapons, in case there should be any need requiring the same.

The reasons moving to this resolution, were the endeavouring to retain, and maintain that principle of self-defence whereupon it was founded, which nature teaches, yet it is contradicted and opposed by our unreasonable

adversaries, from whose unjust violence (by whom they were killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter) they fought by this mean to defend themselves, and resist them; not only in their wanderings, but also when together in their meetings, in case they should be assaulted by enemies. As also that they might be in some posture for their own defence, if bloody papists should make a massacre.

Moreover, it was concluded, that although persons having made defection from the way of God, or lying under public scandal, providing they be sensible of their sin, and give signs of their repentance, may be received into the society, upon engagement to make acknowledgment of their sin, according to the degree of their offence, and the satisfying of the offended, to these who are competent to receive the same. This conclusion since, hath many a time been put in practice; and that which gave the rise to this resolution, was, Many persons in the time of temptation, and hour and power of darkness, having made defection, who through grace attained not only the sense of the dishonour done to God thereby, but also of the offence done to their brethren, with whom they were willing to be reconciled, by acknowledging their offence: And in particular from the sense of the justness of the cause owned by the witnessing party, they were desirous to incorporate themselves with them, which they did signify to them; who though they were willing to encourage them all they could, in the way of duty, yet as to joining with them, being guilty of such scandals, they knew not well what to do in it, so they represented the case to their brethren at this meeting, to get their advice, about the same; who taking it to their serious consideration, resolved upon this conclusion, above mentioned, as the only expedient which they could fall upon, in their case, and circumstances: seeing albeit they wanted ministers, and were not themselves competent for the trial and removal of scandals; yet, that such an engagement should be required and obtained, was rational, they thereby declaring the justness of the censure to be inflicted, albeit they could not do it.

After this meeting the cruel and bloody enemy went on incessantly, and unweariedly in their persecution against dissenters, defection increased, tentations and snares were strawed thick in peoples way, whereby many did fall, were broken and snared, and taken: Faithful and
public

public preaching could not be obtained, whereby people wanted not only the discovery of sins and snares then abounding, and of judgments imminent and lying on, and of wrath impendent and hanging over the land; but also the discovery of their proper and pertinent duty, and what Israel ought to do, in such a day of darkness and gloominess, perplexity and grief, as that was. But in particular, the case of the witnessing party was much to be commiserate, though they got pity from few; for as they could not have the benefit of the gospel by faithful ministers, that they could hear of, and have access to, in all the land, against whom they had not just grounds of withdrawing, in the present circumstances, which was to them their greatest grievance under their heavy pressures; so adversaries rage against them was nothing abated, and the mouths of reproachers opened wide against them, and their tongues bended like bows for lies, but they were not valiant for the truth upon the earth. Among other things, the dissentment from the conclusion of the last meeting about Earlston's going abroad, was very discouraging, and was the occasion of much contention and division; for these who were for the conclusion, were bent for prosecuting it to the utmost of their power, and these who dissented were as much against it. There were several writings past between the one and the other: Some in Glasgow who were chief in the dissentment, wrote to those in Edinburgh, who were for the conclusion, giving reasons of their so doing, which was answered. And *Mr. Young*, a great stickler for the dissentment, with most of the society in Teviotdale wrote also to those in Edinburgh; so that the debate came to no small height, and was like to be the occasion of a greater rent than it produced, if it had not been timely prevented.

HOWEVER, a General Meeting did convene at *Talantin*, in the Parish of Tweed's-muir, and Sheriffdom of Tweedale, upon the 15th of *June*, 1682. After they were met, and prayer ended, and the meeting modelled after the wonted manner; when the questions were going through the members, which was ordinary to be enquired at them, about themselves and these they represented, their owning the Testimony, and being free of public scandal, there fell in confusions among them; for *James Ruffel*, a man of a hot and fiery spirit, being one of those who enquired the same, did stretch some of them

too great a length, and added one question which was never enquired either before or after, nor much at the time, which was, *If they or their Society were free of paying customs at Ports or Bridges?* This he enquired at either one or two, which when perceived, it occasioned some debate, and so was desisted from; however this question of paying customs, was much tossed by the said James Ruffel and some few with him, who not long after, made it, among others, a cause of separation from the witnessing party, by whom it was never so far stretched; for as they did find no fault with those that scrupled to pay it, if they did not impose the like upon others; so they that had clearness for the same, did not withdraw from them upon that head, if they were free of all other things which are ground of withdrawing, though they could have wished they had been free of that also; seeing albeit they counted it one of the grievances and miseries under which they were to groan, as having some tendency indirectly, to the upholding and maintaining of a tyrannical power, which hath been long exercised over the consciences, bodies, and estates of the Lord's people: yet not desiring to wreath an insupportable yoke about their own necks, they looked upon the paying thereof to come under another consideration than the Cefs, &c. the one being newly laid on, and enacted for wicked ends, and employed for unlawful uses; and the other being an antient thing, and a part of the town's privileges, and often employed for necessary uses, as helping of High-ways, Bridges, &c. Nevertheless many of them did not make use of this argument, not being acquainted with the way of its first laying on, nor what use was made of it, but only pleaded the necessity of it, considering that several reputed straight and honest in the cause, but poor, had no other way to maintain themselves and families, except they went to the market to sell something, for which they behoved to pay custom: in that case they thought they might as well do it, as buy ale and bread, which paid excise, whereby that tyrannical power was upheld indirectly, as well as by the other, yet not to be refrained from, seeing they could not live without these. But to return, as the questions were going through the members of the meeting, there was a young man of Dumbarton shire, found to have joined with some that payed the Cefs, for which he was debarred from sitting there; as also, another was debarred, after some debate, because of his marrying with

Mr. Alexander Peden, and joining with some that gave meat and drink to dragoons : But that which occasioned the hottest debate and greatest confusion, was about *Alexander Gordon*, who had joined with *Mr. Peden*, in accepting the sacrament of Baptism to his child from him, whereupon the contest arose, one part of the meeting saying *Mr. Peden* might be joined with, and the other not : So seeing the matter was under debate, and could not be there and then decided, it was thought most expedient to suspend *Alexander Gordon* from the meeting, until enquiry and trial be made, How it was with *Mr. Peden* at the time, and how it was when he joined with him, that thereby it might be the better known how to proceed therein. And for this effect, *James Ruffel* promised to send one, or come himself out of Fife, and to come by *Edinburgh*, that one might be chosen out of *Lothian* to go along with him to the *Monkland*, where they were to get a third person to go along with them to *Mr. Peden* ; which thing *James Ruffel* failed to do, and so the enquiry and trial was not made. At length, when they came to speak of the conclusion anent *Earlstoun's* going abroad, the debate betwixt the one party and the other came to be so hotly handled, that they parted from one another, the one part going to the one part of the field, and the other going to another. However, those who adhered to the conclusion, drawing together, formed themselves into a meeting, whose resolutions were as follow :

In the first place, they did approve all that was done by the former meeting, and in particular testified their adherence to all that was done in prosecuting the first appointment of the said meeting, and also their dissenting from all those who had declined the said appointment, until they see their fault therein, which was, first, to do, and then to undo, by assenting, and then dissenting. Albeit this resolution may appear at first view to be rash and precipitant, in that they withdrew from their brethren upon such grounds, yet if matters be rightly weighed, it will seem more moderate, though not altogether justifiable. If the time of resolving upon the same be considered, which was immediately upon the back of hot debates, when their spirits were aloft and unsettled, and the edge of their zeal keen against that which they judged wrong in them. As also the extent thereof, which was not a withdrawing from them in private societies

ties for prayer and conference, but only in these public and general meetings, until they saw their fault in that dissentment, and likewise the occasion of falling upon it, which was, as is mentioned above, the dissenting from the conclusion about Earlstoun's going abroad, and continuing in it; in resolving of which they were joint and unanimous, and the same was rational, seemed necessary, and was orderly gone about.

That which followed upon this resolution, shall be shewn afterwards.

Next it was concluded by them, that betwixt and the 24th of that instant, every society adhering to them in that particular, of prosecuting the first appointment of the last meeting, should bring their quarterly collection in to Edinburgh.—This was in order to the helping to defray the charges of Earlstoun when he was abroad: which was accordingly done, in so far as their ability could reach.

It is here to be noted, that the societies every quarter of a year, did gather a collection of money, which was sometimes more and sometimes less, in their respective bounds, and sent with their commissioner to the General Meeting, where it was conscientiously distributed, a part of it for public uses, wherein the whole was concerned, if any such thing called for the same, or to prisoners, of which always there was not few in several prisons, or to indigent persons in the country, according as their need required.

Likewise it was concluded, that the first Thursday of that instant, the third Thursday of *July*, and first Thursday of *August*, were to be observed for days of public fasting, by all the societies in the kingdom, owning the Testimony.

In fine, when the meeting was near the dismissing, the dissenters from the conclusion, sent some to those who were for it, desiring to have another meeting with them; whereupon some of either side going together, after some deliberation, condescended upon both time and place, which was to be upon the 11th day of *August*, at Edinburgh.

As Satan, that grand enemy of the Lord's people, did raise the fire of division, the flames whereof burnt so high, seeking thereby to bring the cause under reproach, and its owners in contempt; and when the same should
come

come to be told in Gath, and published in the streets of Askelon; the daughters of the Philistines would rejoice, and the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph; so after it, he was not wanting, to raise the fire of persecution against the whole, thereby seeking the destruction of all together; for immediately intelligence of their meeting together being sent (as was alledged) by the Curate of Tweed's-muir to the council at Edinburgh, who presently issued out a proclamation against them, (who were therein said to be 80 persons) strictly discharging all persons from resetting, harbouring, or supplying them, under the pain of holden-like guilty themselves; as also, commanding their Bailiffs, Sheriffs, &c. to search, take and apprehend them, wherever they could be found: whereby their case was very distressed, being upon the one hand divided among themselves, and upon the other hand, not only sorely persecuted by their cruel and bloody adversaries, but also, instead of pity, misrepresented and reproached by many of their declining brethren. And however deplorable their case was, the condition of the rest of the land was not much better; for enemies cruel rage and outrageous cruelty reached all those who had the conscience or confidence to stand at a distance from compliance with their iniquitous courses. Deadness and darkness not removed, but rather growing, occasioned much, through the want of the public and free preaching of the Gospel, the having of which, in the saddest of times, is a great encouragement, and proves comforting and confirming, in order to the holding on and holding out in duty; yea, though the trials and afflictions attending the going about the same should be many, and these fiery and bloody.

NEVERTHELESS, according to the appointment of the last meeting, A General Meeting did convene at Edinburgh, upon the 11th of August, 1682. consisting of persons who were for, and also such as were against the foresaid conclusion. It might have been expected, that at this time the spirits of both parties should have been meek and mild, having so much time, calmly and deliberately to think upon matters, and that passion should have been guarded against, having seen so much of the bad effects of it formerly. But as confusions and divisions were at the last meeting, so they were at this; which was matter of humiliation to behold, and is ground

of sorrow to think upon; a part of which was thus occasioned: As Mr. James Renwick and James Ruffel, with some others, were coming home from the last meeting, being all for the conclusion which was dissented from; it was judged necessary by them, that an answer should be written to the Letters sent from Glasgow by some of the dissenters; intending thereby further to clear and confirm those who adhered to the conclusion, and for convincing and reclaiming those who were against it, or for rendering the obstinate more inexcusable: and to do this, Mr. James Renwick and James Ruffel were employed, who undertook to write each of them one, and promised to meet two or three days before the meeting, for revising each other's papers, and if needful to put them both in one. Accordingly they did meet, and read each other's papers; but Mr. James, though he agreed with the scope and matter of the other's writing, yet not with some expressions in it, so it was concluded that each should be kept by itself. However, upon the foresaid day of meeting, after the commissioners had given in their commissions, as was usual, and the preses chosen, Mr. James's paper against the dissentment was read, containing an answer to the objections of the opposents, and likewise some reasons inducing to foresaid conclusion. But as he was of a meek and tender spirit, so in this paper, tho' the reasons were solid, weighty, and sharp, yet the strain of it was condescending and gaining, whereby there was nothing said against it; but when James Ruffel's (who was of a fiery and hot spirit) his paper came to be read, the most part of the meeting as well those who were for the conclusion as those who were against it, except two or three, condemned it, as having too much bitterness, untenderness and reflections in it. But in the time of his and the meeting's contending about that paper and other things, an alarm coming, they parted at that time, and at night met again without the town, where after long reasoning and debating betwixt the meeting and him, and two with him, viz. John Henderson and Patrick Grant, in which the heat was not small, nor the confusions few, upon which he and these two gave in a written protestation (which they had drawn up before) to the meeting, intitled, "The Protestation of the Societies of true Presbyterians in the shire of Fife and Perth, against disorderly persons." In which, adhering to foresaid conclusion at
last

the last meeting, they protest against admitting any to sit as members of the meeting, contrary to the conclusion of the last, and then mention several things, whereof if any were guilty, they were not to be admitted as members of a *Convention*, (so term they the General Meeting) some of which the meeting did look upon as causes of withdrawing, and some not. Likewise they gave in a paper about the names of the days of the week, and months of the year, wherein were several unsuitable and unfavoury, unchristian expressions; and so he and his comrades left them, after he had occasioned some confusion, which otherwise might not have fallen out, as was evident both at the last meeting and this: And after he was parted from them he was was not idle; by taking trouble to himself, he created more to others; for he and some few with him, seeking to justify what they had done, were at no small pains to inform, or rather misinform severals about the proceedings at the last and this meeting, in going through the country, reading his papers to sundry men and women. Yet he gained few to his party. Yea, he wrote abroad to Earlstoun, misrepresenting the proceedings of this meeting and the last, whereby he and Mr. Hamilton were in hazard (as no wonder) of being jealous of friends, and their doings at home: To know the certainty of which, he sent here a copy of the information he had got; which when received, was both astonishing and wounding to look upon. Whereupon it was judged necessary for the vindication of the cause, clearing of themselves, and better information of friends abroad, to send one to them who knew the whole affair, and was in some capacity to inform them of every circumstance relating to it, and expedient for them to know. So Mr. James Renwick was fixed upon as the fittest; who accordingly went, and by his true and clear information gained them to a better impression of those they were somewhat jealous of before; and immediately came home again. However, as James Rufel after this, much opposed the witnessing party by word and writ, both at home and abroad; so in particular he opposed Mr. Renwick both before and after he was a minister, against whom he alledges, that at this time, when he was abroad, he was guilty of perjury in acquainting Mr. Hamilton with matters, without taking the engagement to *secresy*, which was so far given heed to by some, through his influence, that they made it a cause

of their not hearing him preach, until afterwards they came to be better informed, and then they did acknowledge their fault. But as Mr. Renwick was sadly mistaken in other things, so also in this; for when the engagement was tendered to Mr. Hamilton, he scrupled to take the same, which when considered by Mr. James, he judged it his duty notwithstanding thereof, not to keep up matters from him, which if he had done, would have tended to the prejudice of the cause, and thereby he would have made it a bond of iniquity, contrary to the intention of its first imposers.

Howbeit, if Mr. Renwick was wrong in this, James Ruffel was first in the fault, by his acquainting the said Mr. Hamilton, with matters before him, without the said engagement (*viz. in his accusation, and misinformation written to him, which is yet extant.*) But to return from this unpleasent digression. After James Ruffel, and the other two were gone, and day light being come, they were necessitate to part, for fear of danger. Yet that same day they met again within the town, where Alexander Gordon, and some of the dissenters from the conclusion, above specified, being present, it was judged necessary that something should be done in relation to them. So concerning Alexander Gordon, seeing he was suspended from the former meeting upon the account of his baptizing his child with Mr Peden, this meeting upon the account that the enquiry about Mr. Peden was not made; enquired at him, if he was willing before them, to engage to acknowledge his offence, providing Mr. Peden, after trial, be not found to have been faithful when he joined with him; which he most willingly and chearfully did. And so upon this condition, he was received in, as a member of the meeting.

Likewise concerning the dissenters the meeting proceeded thus, in order to them; asking if they were willing to acknowledge their offence in what they had done, which if not, they were not clear to act with them. To which, the dissenters said, that they desired to hear Earlstoun's letter (which he had sent home, giving some account of his progress abroad) because possibly thereby, they might be more convinced of their mistake, and cleared in their duty: which the meeting granted. And when they had heard the same, they acknowledged that the appointment of sending one abroad was duty: and that they were out of their duty in their dissenting from

from it. And so jointly with the rest of the meeting, approved all the conclusions of the foregoing meetings, and so approved of the dissenting from them upon the account of declining the foresaid appointment. This was satisfying to all the meeting, whereupon they were received as members thereof; and in token of the burial of that dissentment, it was concluded unanimously, that the objections of the dissenters, together with all answers thereto, should be destroyed. After which, these conclusions were jointly by them concluded upon.

1st, It was concluded that a call should be sent to Mr. Thomas Douglas, inviting him to come home, and when come, if no exceptions be found against him, he is to be joined with, but if there be any just exceptions, his charges are to be paid and himself dismissed. The falling upon this resolution, proceeded from their longing to have the gospel freely preached by faithful ministers, which they had long been deprived of: and to have that foul stain, that they would hear no ministers, which was cast upon them removed. And from a desire in particular to have the benefit of his ministry, with which, they had been privileged before, having heard of his remaining affection to the cause, they judged it their duty to write to him, being at the time in England, in order to his home coming. Accordingly a letter was written, and sent, to which he returned an answer, giving some reasons of his not coming which were not very satisfying.

2^{ly}, Also, it was concluded upon the account of disability to manage the affair, that the honourable Alexander Gordon of Earlstoun, be desired to settle his affairs abroad, and to turn his commission into his much honoured brother Robert Hamilton his hand; yet not to leave matters in confusion, which may prove disadvantageous to the cause, by rendering friends suspicious of them, but that these who know of his errand, and being there, may be also acquainted with his departure. And for that end what time he saw fit, was assigned to him to settle his affairs abroad, but with all expedition in his return home, was enjoined upon him. And for his more speedy, and better return: It was concluded that all the societies should collect money, according to their abilities, and bring the same timeously to their next adjacent societies that it might all come into Edinburgh betwixt and the last of that instant.

The reason of their desiring Earlstoun to return, is couched in the conclusion; in short, it was the maintaining him abroad, far surmounted their ability, tho' not their willingness. However, having found some good effects his being there had produced, they saw it necessary that his place should not be left empty, so they condescended upon Mr. Hamilton to supply the same, into whose hands they should turn his commission. Yet fearing lest friends abroad among whom he had been conversant, might become thereby suspicious of them, that he should acquaint them therewith, but affixing him no time for his return, though their desire was, that he should hasten it. Albeit this was signified to him presently after the meeting, yet he did not return until the spring.

Likewise it was concluded, that none thereafter should be admitted as Commissioners without written commissions, that so order may be kept, and counterfeits discovered. This was only that order might be observed, and for discovering any cheats or counterfeits, in case any such should endeavour to creep in among them, to get notice of what they were about.

As likewise it was concluded, that whatever is, hath been, or may be concluded by the General Meeting, may not be dissented from, but these who have any thing to object, let them come to the next meeting, and give in their reasons, that they may cognosce upon them, and determine as they may be found relevant. This was not, but that their conclusions might not be dissented from, not looking upon them as unalterable statutes; but their meaning and desire was, that off-hand, they should not be declined (especially by these who had been unanimous in making the same) in the interval between the meeting they were resolved at, and the other following, having before their eyes the sad effects which the dissenting from the conclusion about Earlstoun's going abroad, had produced. And so for preventing the like in time coming, and out of love to have union preserved among them, they judged it necessary that in case any should come afterward to find ground of objections against any of the conclusions resolved upon at the present meeting, they had free liberty to give them in at the next, that so after consultation, and deliberation about the same, the conclusion might stand, be altered, or altogether laid aside, as the objections were found groundless, or relevant.

Moreover

Moreover, it was concluded that every society should bring the names of their places, and the names of the places of their next adjacent societies, to the next *General Meeting*, that so a way may be fallen upon, which hitherto was neglected, to keep with their said next adjacent society, a Christian fellowship in prayer, according to the second conclusion of the first *General Meeting* which met at the Logan-house upon the 15th of December, 1681.

Though little or no effects followed upon this conclusion, according to the method laid down in it: yet that which was very advantageous to the cause and proved strengthening to the hands of the owners thereof, was the result, *viz.* the settling, and keeping a Correspondence of some societies together, which is commonly called *Shire-Meetings*, the manner of which is a little described above.

Lastly, It was concluded that the last Thursday of that instant, the last Thursday of September, and the second Thursday of October, were to be observed as days of fasting and prayer, by all the societies: and the next *General Meeting* was appointed to meet at Darmade, upon the 2d of November, which day, was to be kept a day of fasting and prayer by all remaining at home.

As before this meeting, so after it, the case of the country was sad: the enemies desire, not only to kill the body, but also to wound the consciences of people, was insatiable, whereby the land was defiled. They went still on pressing conformity with their wicked courses; especially that wretched *Test* was much imposed upon the consciences of many, and much yielded unto: and compliance with abjured Prelacy, was much endeavoured, and (alas! much obtained) the recusants imprisoned, fined, or otherwise dealt with as these enemies saw fit. But in a special manner, the condition of the *United Societies* was very much distressed, having a potent and powerful enemy to wrestle with, whose malice was cruel, and keen, against them: But that would have been more easily borne, if they had wanted contendings with several of their dear brethren, both upon the one hand, and the other, which they could not get evited, unless they had shown the want of love to them by suffering sin upon them, in not witnessing against it. Before, they had but one party to deal with, and these all on the left hand,
going

going on in declining courses, from formerly sworn unto principles: now, they had another to contend against on the right hand, running into excesses of zeal, beyond its due boundaries; so that betwixt the two they were at no small trouble. James Russel after his separation from them, at the last meeting, laid out himself greatly, with a few others, to misrepresent the *Societies*, both by word and writing, at home and abroad, which was matter of discouragement, and grief.

However in the midst of these perplexities they were grappling with, they wanted not some matter of encouragement, and ground of hope. Though they wanted the sympathy of many at home, whose concernedness with them in their low condition might have been expected; yet the Lord whose tender mercies fail not, stirred up some abroad, to pity and sympathize with them in their wilderness state.

Mr. William Brakel, a faithful and godly minister of the church of *Leewarden* in *Friezland*, through the information of *Earlstoun*, but more especially of *Robert Hamilton*, (one who hath various ways declared much concernedness with, and laid out himself not a little for the encouragement of the suffering remnant) this minister highly approved of the cause owned, and suffered for, by the United Societies, as being the Lords cause: and shewed much sympathy with them in their distress; as may be evident in a letter written by him to them, very suitable and pertinent to a people warring under the cross. Which letter, because it was so much spoken of afterward, and to let the tender sympathy of that worthy minister with the afflicted be seen, for which he will not want his reward: And that the same may tend to his commendation, although since, by the misinformation of some Scots ministers in *Roterdam*, and others, too much given heed unto by him, he hath altered his mind, I shall insert here a true copy of it in English into which language it was faithfully translated out of the Latin, in which it was originally written.

To our Fathers and Brethren that are under the persecution, in the Church of Scotland.

ALTHOUGH I do not esteem my gifts so great as to write to you who are so eminently taught of the Holy Spirit; yet I cannot keep silent from shewing you, that my soul is knit to yours, which sometimes uses to be a com-

comfort to the afflicted, to wit, to have some to bear burdens with them.

Whether I shall weep for sadness, or rejoice for gladness, is to me a great doubt. If I gave way to affection, grief would prevail; but when I consult with reason, joy abounds; because I heartily embrace the cause of this, although joined with the cause of the other; and I would not wish the cause of that taken away, with any disadvantage to this.

My heart is not a little wounded with sympathy, when I call to mind the sad things you are meeting with; when I consider how you are deprived of all the good things and means of life, that you are put to lodge day and night in the open air, without any shelter from the sun's heat, rain or cold, (how do you live? surely God feeds you from heaven) when you embrace the bare rock for a bed, having the heavens, or it may be the cold snow for a covering; when I consider what it is to see the little ones (it may be) weeping for hunger and cold, and cannot get wherewith to warm them; when I consider what it is to be always surrounded with deadly foes, and to hear sometimes of the husband, sometimes of the father or mother, wife, son or daughter to be taken to execution, and all the day to be as lambs allotted to the slaughter; what brother? what Christian? yea, what unbiassed man can think on these things but with excess of grief?

But, upon the other hand, when I consider the heavenly abounding blessings, the great abundance of the Spirit, and spiritual joy, the deniedness to all worldly things, the ardent love to God and your neighbour, the cheerful martyrdom for the name of Jesus, the holiness of life, &c. which God your father has in a more abundant manner bestowed on you than any church in the world in these times. When I call to mind, that God is preserving you as a remnant of anciently a most flourishing church, and calling you as the first fruits, yea, I say, the first fruits of a church shortly; yea, I say, shortly to be raised up: When I see our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, the only head of his church, glorified in your miraculous preservation, and encompassing you as with a wall of fire round about, calling you either living or dying, and setting you forth, and preserving you to all, either godly or ungodly, who are lurking in quiet here and there; for to give a testimony for himself. I say, when

I seriously ponder these things, how can I be sad? what shall I say, but glory to the Lord? what shall I do, but most willingly approve of his most holy and wise government of his household, who follows you with a greater and more infinite and eternal love and good will than I can express; should I seem to repine by wishing a change, and so disapproving of his dispensations? nay, the most holy and merciful God does all things well.

But what shall I say unto you, my dear brethren? I approve of your careful and mutual correspondence with one another, and all the churches; I approve of your strict discipline, both as to the private life of every member, and also as to your separation from these swelling in pride Bishops and their adherents. And likewise I approve of your separation from these who have accepted the indulgence from the civil magistrate, and so have acknowledged a foreign and extraneous power in the church, and introduced it into the church against the sole government of our only King Jesus Christ, which hath proven the destruction of the church, and the greatest hinderance to its restoration. I approve also of your separation from the frightened and searing, though otherwise pious men, and these who are inclining to the indulged side, loving a short bodily ease, though with a check of conscience; who deprive themselves of all that open boldness they ought to have, and entrap themselves in inextricable snares, not considering how great hurt they do to the church. O how much rather is it to be chosen to die a noble and Christ-glorifying death, and to obtain the crown of martyrdom, or to endure all sorts of injuries and oppressions in the desarts and mountains, *than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness.*

Go on therefore, dear brethren, as ye have begun; *Come out from among them, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; Then shall I receive you, and be to you a father, and ye shall be unto me as sons and daughters, saith the Lord of hosts.* Let not the devil and his instruments and followers fright you, who is come unto you full of great wrath, because he knows his time is but short, for the God of peace shall bruise him under your feet.

Let not the cruelty nor subtilty of enemies, nor hunger, nor cold, nor the prison, nor a gallows, nor the sword, fear you: *none of these things shall separate you from the love of God. Yea, your light affliction, which is but*
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for a moment, worketh for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Let always that saying of our Saviour's be in your mind, *He that takes not up his cross and follows me, is not worthy of me, He that finds his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.* Neither let your peace entice you to comply with those, who, although they be godly men, yet they live only for themselves, and not for the good of the church; nay rather for its hurt. O how pleasant and noble a thing is it to lay the foundation of a more pure church, to make a way by which King Jesus shall enter to restore his church in Scotland. O! how profitable will it be to after generations to have you for a good example to follow? and that they can say of you, so and so did our forefathers, such and such things suffered they in such and such a case; they behaved themselves so and so. O what excess of joy shall they have, who (after the persecutions are over) shall see the people of God in peace glorifying him? How shall they then be confounded who are sitting silent, frightened, and deserting the cause and people of God? How shall they then come trembling and confessing their faults to you? and these who are now persecuting you, how shall they blush and be ashamed? Let me speak to you in the words of Isaiah, *Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word, your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.* Then says the Psalmist, *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.* So that a man shall say, verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily there is a God to judge the earth. Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you; but to you who are troubled, rest.

Therefore my brethren, watch, stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, be strong, and God will strengthen your soul. All ye that hope in him, be ye stable, unmoved, always abounding in the work of the Lord. *Hold fast that you have, let no man take your crown. Be ye faithful unto the death, and God shall give you a crown of life. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest always upon the lot of the righteous.*

Farewel, Reverend Fathers, dear brothers and sisters; the Lord enlighten you with the light of his countenance, and grant you to taste of his all-sufficiency, and strengthen

you in the faith, that ye may always behold these things that are invifible, and live by them; and that he may fill you with the fpirit of joy and gladnefs, and that he may cherifh you in the hope of the life to come, and fanctify you more and more, that ye may do all things in his fight, in faith, as the Sons of God through Chrift Jefus, in love, in fear, in obedience, with clearfulnefs, wifdom, patience and conftancy.

The Lord be your fun and fhield, and rock of habitation, yea, all in all to you, both in time and throughout all eternity. ————— fhall fhew you our mind in the reft. Be mindful of me in your prayers, that the Almighty may give me a greater meafure of his Spirit, for comfort, holinefs and faithfulnefs in my work, and fitnefs to go about it. The Lord be with you. I greet you with the right hand of fellowfhip.

WILLIAM BRACKEL,

There was likewife at this time, a Letter fent by ROBERT HAMILTON, which, though it be directed to *Mr. Renwick*, yet it was defigned for the whole Societies, as is evident through the whole; the tenor whereof follows:

S I R,

AUGUST 22d, 1682.

YOU may let me know if you received my laft. It may be we fhall not have many occafions to write, for the execution-day of the Lord feems to approach, not only upon Scotland, but upon the whole churches; and that becaufe of the contempt of the precious gofpel, and the perfidy, indifferency, formality and unconcernednefs of the profefors thereof. The day is coming, wherein all that bear a name of godlinefs fhall be tried. O my friends, the day is coming, wherein the people of God fhall be put to that blefled neceffity, to have no where to fhelter themfelves, but under the fhadow of the Almighty. O happy thefe, who have been or fhall be in any meafure helped to be faithful; who fhall get their fouls for a prey. I doubt not but fome fhall be witnefses both of the Lord's glorious coming, and of his ftriking thro' kings, and breaking down of kingdoms, drying up of rivers, purging and cleafing of his houfe, and taking
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of his seat to reign and rule as a free king in his own house; but O! who is the man that shall abide the day of his coming? I trow, it will be hard to determine: Yet I cannot but believe and hope, that poor despised Scotland's muster in that day, shall come short of no land in the world, which has been honoured above all others to bear the standard with this glorious motte, **CHRIST JESUS**, not only King of the Jews, but **KING OF KINGS** and **LORD OF LORDS**, Zion's King, without competitor.

And, my dear Friends, that the Lord's way may be the more remembered, I think it might be of great advantage to lay it upon every society to keep a register, not only of the Lord's glorious way of dealing with his people, in hiding, delivering, conducting them, &c.; but also his method with the enemies of all sorts;—to set down what and when such a family or person did against the Lord, his work, or any of his people; and then to see them in their families, in their children, and in their deaths. If this be gone about, I can assure you, that not only the present generation, but the generations to come shall profit thereby. For this long time, and now more than ever, the Lord has been making up the want of faithfulness in ministers, by preaching with terrible things in righteousness, and that not only by his legible judgments on the families, persons, and deaths of the open enemies; but more especially upon the persons, families and deaths of lukewarm, apostate professors. When I was in that land, I travelled somewhat in that work to great advantage; there are few or none you shall find of such, but either they died miserably, or are living so; either without children, or possessed with devils, madness, fools, whoremongers, &c.—As also, I think if the Lord had not a mind to return to our land, he would not have been at pains to have written such large histories of his wrath upon families and persons as he has done, which if he returned not again, should all be buried: neither would he have received such a burnt-offering at Scotland's hands, as the heads, hands, and estates of so many of his most precious children. Of this I need say no more.

It might also be thought upon, if it were not fit to have the fittest persons chosen out for catechizing, which is a duty so necessary this day; I am sure as necessary as any I know. I hope when our necessities are
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so great, that none will scruple to undertake it, providing they find themselves able.

O go on; go on, he is faithful who hath said it, it shall be well with the righteous.—And is it not somewhat promising this day, that the Lord is helping some to keep foot-side with the brethren at home, not only in our first Testimony against M. M——d, but in the late endeavours; and seems not only to favour us, but to accept of them at our hands? It is observable, our moving and yours was not only one way, but at one time, notwithstanding the distance, and ignorance of one another's moving; for though there have been some in that land, who not only for themselves, but in name of country-sides have written to me, as I am informed by my brother; yet since I left that land, I have received few letters from any, and I judge none concerning the public. What has been in it, I shall not say, though for mine own part I have been made to bless the Lord for it, who in that trial, as in others, learned me to draw nearer and nearer to himself; and to rejoice in his favour, love and unchangeableness, yea, under the shadow of his wings. And O unspeakable love! who in any measure has kept us in his hand; for since I saw you, I have been threatened to be starved out of my judgment, or conscience, and to be bribed out of it with the offers of honour and preferment. O praises, praises to him for his goodness!

O dear Friends, let us fall down before the Lord, and adore him, who after all our several trials has not only brought us to be one in mind and judgment, but also employed about the same thing; O for grace, for grace to be kept in his hand. When I was as a dead man, he called me out from all my acquaintances into a strange land. A stranger to their humour, to their language, to their persons, poor and empty, yet he led me out, I not knowing whither I was going, he put work in my hands, made friends for me, and is now carrying on his work. O bless, bless the Lord? and pray that it may go forward. I must say to the commendation of the goodness of God, that though when I came here, (as afterward they declared) they not only hated our nation, but our cause. But O what a change, in such a time! for the Lord (after that they were engaged to mind our church publicly, and to appoint weekly and monthly meetings for
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the same) gave them an opportunity for a public testimony, stating it the same with our own, after he had let them (in much prayer and wrestling, day and night) find the sweetness of that way, he gave them the victory to the wonder of themselves and on-lookers, and to the astonishment and conviction of their adversaries, which not only has encouraged the godly to public testifying, but endeared them so to our church and cause, that they cannot hear it spoken of, but they are at the melting down with tears. But having spoken of this in my last, I need speak no more of it, only let it stir up all ranks to thankfulness, tenderness, more holy zeal and forwardness.

Amongst many other overtures my brother shewed me from you, that of having our youth educated for a new nursery of ministers, did not a little astonish me, it being of a long time both my great work and exercise here, and I proposed it, and the Lord had made it acceptable at the very first moving of it, so that I was designed to have written it to you long since, had not the weight of it so pressed me for some days, tying me to my chamber.

O dear Friends, lay it to heart, persons, and families, and societies, every lass and lad, by fasting and prayer, see how the Lord seems to pass by the ministers of Scotland, pitching upon strangers, who not only offer their service, but are willing to lay down their lives for the rebuilding of that once so glorious and beautiful work, and to be at the cost and charges of educating our youth, whereby they may be fitted for the service of the house of our God, and to ordain such as shall be judged fit for the great, O great work of the ministry.

Worthy and dear Friends, as this would be gone about with much fasting and prayer, so, for the Lord's sake, let none be chosen for this end, but such who have given evidence of their REAL PIETY, HOLINESS, and TENDERNESS: And O let none, as they would not be made monuments of the Lord's anger and wrath in an extraordinary way, venture upon it uncalled. Let them read Isaiah's and Jeremiah's call, and Titus i. 7, 8, 9. &c.

O the plagues, the plagues that may be seen on our ministers this day, yea on such as were once as bright stars in our horizon, may be a terror to all posterity to venture lightly on so great a work. Let not the want of learning startle any, where the main thing is really felt
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and known : yea, it has not been the want of learning, but of grace, holy zeal, and courage, that has so brought us among the feet of our adversaries, and kindled the wrath of the Lord so hot against us. O then, upon all hands, let it be gone about with much fasting and prayer, as being the ordinary and appointed way to know the Lord's will, and to be fitted for going about it, and managing it aright.

Worthy friends, to me this matter hath been often represented, as amongst the greatest concerns yet in hand ; as a mean that may be eminently for recovery from the dead, or of giving us the forest blow that ever we yet had. O ! a down pouring of the Spirit in his fulness, be your allowance, both for your encouragement in your managing of it, and for a token of our Master's approbation of the work.

And O forget not to mind poor *Freizland*, and in particular the work begun here, let the godly here, lie near to your hearts and prayers before the throne, for that church, I dare say, is dearer to them than their lives. Mind also worthy Mr. Brackel, who has now written to you : it is he whom the Lord is honouring here, and hath honoured to give a great testimony, of which I gave you an account in my last. And O for the Lord's sake mind worthless, worthless me, who am as a dead man, of a long time, separate from my brethern, and shot at, yea bitterly shot at, by all ranks of off-fallers from the cause of God. I will tell, I must tell you, I have found my Lord, unchangeable, in every estate the same, ay the same up making, and more than up making portion ; sweet and easy is his cross ; I cannot get him commended : O his love is lovely, yea loveliness itself : O if he were kent, whose mercy endureth for ever ! O seek him to our land, to our mother, and to ourselves, that his kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. O let him do with us as he will, that he would but come as in the days of old ; yea, and forever blessed be his name for what I have already seen and heard, both of sweet Scotland, and poor *Freizland*. O let us not envy that he is enlarging his tents and setting up in other places ; his presence is more than able to fill heaven and earth ; there is no fear that he want plenishing where he comes. Let him conquer, let him conquer, until he has stretched his conquest from one end of the earth to the other, in breadth and length,

and length, and have made a footstool of all his enemies.

Dear and worthy Brethren, I will not further trouble you, expecting that my brother shall write unto you; only this I add, that as for the number of those that come in order to the ministry, it is condescended upon, that four or five come at first, and they are to stay by Mr. Brackel, or else in some College here in the winter, and then receive ordination in the spring; for once having so many, more might be condescended upon, as the Lord gave clearness. The Lord himself direct and guide you through all the parts of it, that he be not further provoked.—The Lord be with you all, and send a joyful meeting.

ROBERT HAMILTON.

Mr. Renwick in his third Letter (as it stands in the printed volume) hath respect to this and some other Letters received from Mr. Hamilton, in which he shews his sense of the weightiness of that affair; but it appeared sadly afterward, that others of them took too little notice of this Letter.

After the Letter from Mr. Brackel was spread abroad among the societies, coming at such a time, and containing such things suiting their case, and being sent not only from a stranger, but a faithful godly minister, the same proved hand-strengthening and heart-comforting and confirming to them, to prosecute that noble testimony in their station and capacity which they had put their hand unto. And to evidence the grateful sense of the favour received by his Letter, they wrote to him. Moreover, after this meeting, Earlstoun wrote home, giving an account, that there was a door opened abroad for teaching young men at an university, a benefit which could not be rightly gotten at home, which was obtained by the means of the said Mr. William Brackel; though Mr. Hamilton and Earlstoun were not wanting to do what they could in it also. So he desired there might be some young men presently sent over, in order to the following of their studies there, where afterward they might come to get the benefit of ordination, when fit for the same; which letter when received was very refreshing and encouraging, seeing thereby their deplorable case was not only pitied by strangers, but the hope

of getting the benefit of the gospel again, was a little revived. So by some who received it, with consent of others, it was judged expedient (seeing the contents of the letter could not be answered without the consent of friends) to acquaint the *Societies*, upon the account of the getting that business soon dispatched, to meet sooner than the time appointed by the last meeting. Whereupon the time and place was appointed to be at *Edinburgh*, upon the Eleventh of *October*, and the societies to be acquainted therewith.

ACCORDING to which appointment, A General Meeting did convene at the time and place above-mentioned; where, after these representing the respective societies had given in their commissions, and the Præses chosen, he enquired, in order to the knowing that none were there who were guilty of scandal, if any person had ought to object against any present: At which some rose up, and said that Andrew Young who was there representing the society of Teviotdale had revealed that which he was engaged not to discover; which thing he denied. save only his telling to some, not concerned, of some persons who were present at the publishing of the Lanerk Declaration: As also, that he had heard *Mr. John Hepburn*, against whom there were reasons of withdrawing; which the said Andrew Young granted he did, and yet resolved to go on in the same. After long and hot debating and jangling betwixt him and severals of the meeting, it was at last concluded by them, that the said Andrew Young should be suspended from sitting there, upon the account of joining and resolving to join with the said *Mr. John Hepburn*, against whom there were several reasons of withdrawing, particularly his not joining and concurring with our late *Martyr ministers*, in rejecting and disowning the authority of *Charles Stuart*.—By which joining, he had broken that conclusion of the General Meeting, *viz. That nothing should be done by any particular person without the consent of the Society whereof he was a member, in things wherein their knowledge and consent was necessary to be had, &c.* After he was acquainted with this, he went away greatly enraged, saying he would oppose himself to them and their doings, which he hath in some measure made out since.

When the confusion occasioned by this debate was over, and nothing found against any of the rest of the meeting,

meeting, they proceeded in order to the choosing of the young men who were to go abroad to follow their studies, the doing of which was a great end of appointing this meeting so soon; which was gone about after this manner: First, praying that the Lord would direct them in that weighty affair. Then the young men who were present, and to be put in the list, were desired to speak their minds, which they did satisfiably, first of the work they were to go about; next of the going in such a manner, which was not ordinary. There was six put in the list, (all of a blameless life, and not only of one judgment with themselves, but forward and zealous then, in adhering to, and promoting the Testimony) of whom four were present, viz. *Mr. James Renwick, John Smith, Mr. John Flint, and Mr. William Hardy*; and two absent, viz. *Mr. William Boyd and John Nisbet*. Then there was six pieces of paper taken, all of one magnitude and form; and upon four of them were four figures, each of them having a figure a-piece, and two wanted, in order to the electing of four out of the six, which was the number judged fit to be sent abroad at that time. Whereupon the four young men were called in (being before desired to remove) and gave an account of their ages to the meeting. Then after praying again that the Lord would determine as he saw fit; these young men presenting themselves, drew the pieces of paper out of a bonnet, the oldest being still preferred to draw first. As for those who were absent, two drew for them. Those who got the papers wanting the figures were to stay at home, which fell to be *John Smith and Mr. William Hardy*; and those who got the papers with the figures were to go abroad, two of them were present, viz. *Mr. James Renwick, and Mr. John Flint*, and two were absent, viz. *Mr. William Boyd and John Nisbet*, for whom two drew. Then praying that the Lord would bless those on whom the lots had fallen, this work was closed. Thereafter it was concluded, that 100 Pound Scots, should be allowed to the four young men called to go abroad, (to each 25 Pound Scots) in order to defray their expences in their voyage, and that what was needful to provide them in cloaths and other necessaries, was, over and above, to be taken off for them at Edinburgh: And the collection for this effect, was to be sent with those who were to come from the Societies to the next General Meeting; and the young Men were desir-

ed to be ready for their voyage betwixt and the second week of November. This conclusion was chearfully consented unto, and as willingly and readily put in practice; for immediately thereafter, not only the money was given to the young men which was allowed them, but also what was needful was provided for them at Edinburgh, two of them, *Mr. William Boyd* and *John Flint*, in November thereafter took ship, and went to the Netherlands, to the *University of Groningen*; but *Mr. James Renwick* was not ready to go until December. However, though he went not so soon as the other two, yet in the short time he was there, the Lord so fitted and qualified him for the great work which afterward he undertook, and finished with joy, that he was sooner ready for the work he was sent about than any of them; for on May 10th thereafter, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Groningen, in whom they had great satisfaction, and to whom they gave no small commendation, as may be seen in their testificate to him. As for *John Nisbet* being at that time at London, where *Earlstoun* had left him, he was written unto, shewing him of that business, and a testificate sent him; but he delaying to go, was not long after taken and imprisoned. Although this sending of those young men abroad in order to the obtaining of ordination was much condemned; yet in the circumstances they were then stated in, it was justifiable. The reasons moving to it, with a short vindication of the same, may be seen in the *Informatory Vindication*, but more in the account of *Mr. Renwick's* life and death.

Also it was concluded, that *Mr. James Renwick*, *John Smith*, and *Mr. John Flint* should each of them draw up a paper declaring the grounds whereupon, and the reasons why, the *United Societies* did withdraw from those who had made defection in this backsliding time, withal inviting (the reasons of withdrawing from them being removed) upon their owning the Testimony, to come and join with them, yet testifying the lawfulness of standing at a distance from those who will not; and also clearing themselves of the foul aspersions and sad reproaches cast upon them. Which papers were to be given in to the next meeting, who were to consider upon the same; and these of the foresaid persons who were to go abroad, were desired to have theirs in readiness to be left when they departed,

This conclusion at the time seemed necessary; and the motives pressing thereunto very weighty, (albeit it produced some bitter effects, occasioned by the mismanaging of the same, as shall be shewed afterward) for being upon the one hand traduced as Separatists, Schismatics, and Rejecters of the gospel, &c. which was wounding to hear, and grievous to bear, though their innocency of the thing made it the more supportable. And upon the other hand, longing for this gospel, of which they had long had a famine, and being desirous to have the opportunity of hearing it from these, from whom they had withdrawn upon valid grounds, and in hearing some of whom formerly, their souls had been refreshed, and whom they followed while they continued preaching freely, and faithfully, as becomes ambassadors of Christ: They judged this the most rational way to clear themselves of these grievous imputations, and also to declare their willingness to join with and hear these ministers from whom they had withdrawn, tho' they were (as they should have been) dear to them, providing the cause of withdrawing were removed, to call and invite them, with whom then they would with heart and hand, thereby testifying that their withdrawing was not obstinate.

According to the desire of the meeting, the three young men wrote each of them a paper; and the two who went abroad, left theirs, before they took voyage. That which followed upon this resolution, the account of the following meetings will make manifest.

Further it was concluded, that the much honoured Mr. *Robert Hamilton* should be conjunct with his brother, the honourable *Alexander Gordon* of *Earlstoun*, in his commission. And therefore the meeting gave full power to Mr. *James Renwick*, to write in their names unto both the foresaid persons, in order to this appointment.

The reasons inducing to this resolution, were *Earlstoun's* great desire that it should be so, knowing that, as in managing that affair, two would be better than one; so, that Mr. *Hamilton* would be a good second, whereof he had already gotten several experiences*. Also,

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* Mr. *Hamilton* had obtained acquaintance in *Leewarden*, and with Mr. *Brackel* before *Earlstoun's* going abroad, to which he was led by a special providence. As also, one reason of the commissioning of Mr. *Hamilton*, and calling home *Earlstoun*, was, the latter was expensive above their ability to afford, and the former was none at all, but several times, and ways procured help to them at home, from the hands of strangers.

considering his being conjunct with *Earlstoun*, he would prove advantageous to the cause, in order to the obtaining of strangers to have a good impressi^on of the same, and sympathy with its owners, at the time in distress; he having, both before, and after *Earlstoun* went there, laid out himself very much for that end; and it was hoped that he would do it more, when the same was laid on him by them. As likewise when *Earlstoun* should return home, to which he was desired by the last meeting, he might the better supply his place. In pursuance of this conclusion, and of the meetings desire to Mr. *Renwick*, he wrote abroad to both the foresaid persons.

Moreover, it was concluded, that the 24th of that month should be observed by all the societies, a day of thanksgiving unto the Lord for his known mercies received at the meeting. Which in particular, was the getting such a demonstration of the sympathy of strangers with them in their distressed case, as that they had access to send young men to an University, where they would have opportunity of learning; And when fit, get the benefit of ordination, whereby they were in expectation of attaining the great privilege of hearing the gospel, within a short time: A mercy to be highly prized, much valued, and to be thankful for, when they have ground of expecting it, as well as fruitful under it, when enjoying the same.

It was also concluded that the 16th of November should be observed by the societies as a day of humiliation, upon the account of the many provocations that the holy Lord gets; lest that he should withdraw from them. And likewise that the 12th of December should be observed by the societies, as a day of fasting and prayer, to seek earnestly of the Lord that he would remove Satan's fire and fury; which (alas) was too much to be seen among them, and that he would endue them with the spirit of meekness and patience.

The occasion of making this a cause of a fast was, at the preceding meeting, in contending with *James Russell*, there was too much of a spirit of bitterness on both sides evidenced, as also at this meeting, in debating with *Andrew Young*: therefore having a sight of the evil thereof, they desired to mourn for the same, and to seek of the Lord that he would be graciously pleased to remove it; and endue them with a spirit of meekness and patience, which are among the fruits of the Spirit, and suitable

able to appear in contending for the cause with opposites either upon the right hand, or on the left.

AFTER this meeting, as well as before it, the case of the land (which once might have been called *Hephzibah* and *Beulah*) was deplorably sad; enemies riding over the heads of the Lord's people, under whose cruelty and oppression they had been long groaning, and whose burdens were made nothing lighter, but rather heavier. The yoke of prelacy and tyranny was wreathed harder about their necks. And alas! the generality, was *Iffachar*-like, couching under the burdens, but few zealous and *Naphthali*-like, to jeopard their lives upon the high places of the field, for the interest of Christ, their own defence, and their brethrens. As enemies had been much endeavouring to get that principle of self-defence quite abandoned by the people; so, the same was now laid aside by the generality. And as prelacy was set up, and yielding to it sore pressed; so it was much bowed unto, even by many of these who had confessed with their mouth that it was a sin, having many aggravations attending it. And as the *Test*, and other oaths, which heathens would abhor, was much pressed before, so now also.

Faithful and free preaching was wanting, whereby the sins and snares which then were not few, were not discovered, and so people was left to comply, or not comply, as they pleased. And whatever trials and temptations, the land in general met with; the United Societies in particular, never wanted their share of the same: If insnaring oaths and bonds were pressing through the country, they wanted not the temptation of the same, but through free grace they were kept from compliance therewith though they incurred suffering thereby; and the sympathizers with them, upon the account of standing at a distance from them, were few: if searchings of rude and bloody soldiers, filled with hellish fury, were made; the most of these searchings were for them: And if the country wanted public and faithful preaching of the gospel; so did they at this time, which was their greatest grievance. But oftentimes the societies had troubles and trials peculiar to themselves, and which the rest of the land were not perplexed with, as at this time: for beside the rage of malicious enemies, which was keen against them, as well (yea more than) against others, and the want of the faithfully preached gospel, a want which
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the whole land was trysted with; they were sadly represented as Schismatics, Separatists, and Rejecters of the gospel, though in the mean time they were grieved for the want thereof, and longing for it; witness the conclusion of the last meeting to draw up a call to the ministers, which was at this time to be considered. They had also other griefs, which were heavy to bear; as their contendings with *James Ruffel*, who as is related above, having separated from them, had misrepresented them both at home and abroad. And likewise *Andrew Young*, was now much against them; which as it proved strengthening to adversaries; so it was weakening to the hands, and wounding to the hearts of friends.

HOWEVER, a General Meeting did convene at Edinburgh upon the 10th of January, 1683. Prayer being ended, and the meeting modelled after the wonted manner; they approved of what was concluded at the last meeting.

1st, It was concluded, that *John Smith* should draw up the call to the ministers, and present the same to the next meeting. The occasion of this resolution was, according to the desire of the last meeting: each of the three young men drew up a paper, and two of them going abroad, left theirs before they took voyage: and the other was present at the meeting. After all the three papers were read, and serious consideration about the same, none of them was thought fit to give in by itself. So it was concluded that *John Smith* should draw one out of all the three, and to present the same to the next meeting to be by them considered.

Next, the meeting having received the collections from the several societies, distributed the same according to the necessities of some families, and others in need. And appointed receipts for the same to be brought to the next meeting.

Likewise, it was concluded, that the 25th of that instant be observed by the societies, as a day of prayer unto the Lord, blessing him for their preservation at the time (which was no small mercy, having met as it were in the midst of their enemies, and parted in safety,) and also for seeking counsel and direction for managing matters at the next meeting. Which in particular was the resolving upon the call to the ministers, which was looked upon by them as no small business: And the next meeting

meeting was appointed to meet at the *Myres*, upon the 14th of February, 1683.

THE cruelty of enraged enemies, the condition of the land in general, and of the societies in particular continued as is before related, but can scarcely be described in few words; but the reproaches and misrepresentations of opposites on each hand were weighty.

Notwithstanding these things were great hinderances to them, in prosecuting that noble Testimony in their station, which they were owning, and suffering for; yet through grace they were kept from sinking under them, so as to lie by altogether from the duty called for at their hands; and their zeal was rather increased, than diminished, though in severals of them there was more of it, than of knowledge (without which, it can neither be solid, nor lasting) and no wonder if the occurrences of that time be duly pondered: It was a time of deadness and darkness, a day of stumblings and jumbings: poor people being without guides and teachers, like silly sheep, wandering upon the mountains, without a shepherd, and yet having some zeal upon their spirits, which they would gladly have vented: It is not much to be admired that they went wrong in some things (which yet they would have been loath to have done, if they had known it to be so) over which the mantle of charity should be cast, and themselves pitied rather than remembered with disdain, and told of with upbraiding: And though it will not justify any thing wrong done, yet it should make people more charitable, and tender of the doers; especially seeing they are sensible of it themselves, and confess it. Their desire to have the gospel preached (though they were represented, as if they would hear no minister) even by them from whom they had withdrawn upon valid causes, providing the same were removed. Therefore they judged the condescending upon a General Call to be given in to them, was the fittest way to obtain their foresaid desire, and to exoner themselves, but the mismanaging the same was humbling to them, and no ways advantageous to the cause.

ACCORDING to the appointment of the last General Meeting, a meeting did convene at the *Myres*, in the parish of *Eglesham*, and shire of *Renfrew*, upon the 14th

of February, 1683. They approved of what was done at the foregoing meeting.

According to the first resolution whercof, the call to the ministers was brought to this meeting, and agreed upon; and appointed that a copy thereof should be delivered to the ministers that could be gotten at Edinburgh by _____, and that three copies be sent to the ministers after named, viz. *Mr. Alexander Peden, Mr. Michael Bruce, Mr. Thomas Forrester, and Mr. John Hepburn.* After the meeting, copies of the call came to several of the ministers hands, and some diligence was used for that effect. Two men went from Glasgow, with a copy thereof to give to *Mr. Forrester*, who coming to the place where he resided, and not having the opportunity to see him, left it with some of his elders, that shewed it to him, who was much displeas'd therewith; a letter was written concerning it, and subscribed by them, which was sent to Glasgow, and an answer returned. Likewise *Alexander Gordon*, and _____ was appointed to go to Ireland, with copies of the call to present it to *Mr. Alexander Peden, and Mr. Michael Bruce*, as also to *Mr. Samuel Arnot*, who were all at the time in that kingdom. They accordingly went, having a letter with them directed to all the three ministers, with some of whom they had conference. But neither that, nor what else they did there, produced any thing tending to that much desired union with them.

A copy of the letter follows, which evidences the longing desire we had for the benefit of the gospel; as also the great respect, and high esteem we had of these ministers to whom it was directed.

Worthy Fathers,

THE Remnant of the church of Scotland has descended upon an unanimous call to all the ministers that can be found any way concerned with the cause for which they are suffering; and have declared one in general to the said ministers: But we (knowing your concernedness above many) have thought fit to send to you a copy of the same particularly, because of many motives, which to us are weighty. And

1st, Because there is so much ignorance in the country, asent the very fundamentals of religion.

2^{dly}, Be-

2dly, Because there is none now in Scotland, to hold up the fallen banner of our Lord by the preaching of the gospel.

3dly, Because there is so much need of baptism to infants, and so many like to be hard put to it, what by reproach from pretended friends, and persecution from enemies, because their children are unbaptized.

It is true, we know that it is not absolutely necessary to salvation; yet we ought to use all means lawful, to have the same in a cleanly way.

These are some of our grounds for sending so expressly to you, who we hope will answer us. These our Commissioners can shew you more fully our case, and how great our need is of such as you: Therefore we earnestly intreat you to make as little delay as ye possibly can. It may be ye think we will not hear ministers except they preach publicly in the fields: But for answer, we will hear all ministers (whether in houses or fields) who will preach according to the word of God, our Covenants, Confession of Faith and Catechisms Larger and Shorter, that shall embrace this our call, and preach without any limitation, either to time or place, but as conveniency shall offer itself.

Having no more at present to trouble you with; we rest (in the name, and behalf of the rest) your assured friends, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

BY the means related above, and otherways, the call being made public, it occasioned the United Societies to be much misrepresented by many (and even by some who had better thoughts of us before) thinking that we were running upon extravagances. But as some of us at the concluding thereon, and others afterwards, when they saw it, were displeas'd therewith; so it was not long till the faults and mistakes in it were seen, and condemn'd by all of us, as well as by others; and it was desired that all copies thereof should be called in, delivered back, and no more made use of, yea, such was our sense of several things wrong in it; and that it might be known we did not own it, somewhat was published concerning it, in our informatory vindication.

However, tho' we retracted the call because of its un-soundness in several particulars, yet it was thought fit to draw up another call to ministers, that thereby we might endeavour to have the benefit of the gospel as formerly

we enjoyed it: and to endeavour to wipe off that reproach cast upon us, that we were Schismatics, and would hear no minister at all. Which call being drawn up, and agreed unto at the next meeting at Edinburgh on the 8th of May thereafter; and presented to some of the ministers, but not embraced; a copy whereof, may not be improper to insert here, seeing it falls in to be spoken of in this place: And is as followeth.

A Call by a Remnant of the true Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland, who desire to adhere to the true principles thereof; Containing a vindication of their withdrawing: And a protestation, in case of not accepting of this Call; which is to those who were once faithful ministers of our church.

WE are called Schismatics and erroneous in our principles, which we desire to clear ourselves of, to all unbiassed Presbyterians in Scotland, or through the world: And so we shall set down the causes of our present withdrawing.

It is well known, that while these outed-ministers preached faithfully in the fields, and in houses, pleading for their Lord and Master's right, whose embassy they did carry, they were eminently countenanced of the Lord, then our souls did cleave to them; and several of us (in humility be it spoken) did lay out ourselves to the uttermost of our power in our stations for the upholding of the sweet and precious ordinances of our Lord and Master, which our souls rejoiced to follow, and as an evidence of our love to these ordinances, we, according to our engagements in our covenants did appear in armies, with no other design (of which our conscience bears us witness) but for the extirpating of Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, and whatsoever is contrary to sound doctrine, and principles, and against the supporters thereof; and for the setting up, and establishing of Presbyterian government according to our covenant engagements, and some of the ministers joined with us for our encouragement: But the Lord thought fit, for ends known to himself, and ordered it so, as that party was broken (at Bothwel) and upon the back of that dispensation, many stumbled, both ministers and people, for which, we think we may allude to that in John vi. 66. *From that time many of his disciples went away back, and walked*

walked no more with him. So a little time after that break, the enemy driving forward their own design; and seeking by all means the establishing and setting up of their supremacy, and usurping more and more over the prerogatives of our King and Lawgiver, they found a fit opportunity, by a pretended favour, an act called the Act of Indemnity, in which they granted liberty to all that were in arms (some ministers and heritors excepted) upon the taking of a bond: And likewise a liberty to ministers to preach (except the fore-mentioned) upon the terms of some injunctions, limitations and restrictions, which we shall not name here, because we design brevity; but in a word, it was the enemies usurping, and the ministers yielding up the government of Christ's house into the hands of these horrid and avowed usurpers, which a great part of the ministers of the church of Scotland did in a meeting at Edinburgh; the great part of them voting at that meeting for receiving of their ministry on the terms proposed by the usurpers; and so most basely gave up the government of Christ's house into the hands of these his stated enemies; and some of them went to their houses and preached upon the same terms, receiving their new entry (though most corrupt) from them, which was not the door, by which at first they did enter.

We grant, there were some who voted not for the receiving their ministry upon these terms, but yet gave not their protestation against their brethren, though their call to it was clear, for fear of hazard or something to that purpose, which cannot be found found. And so this is one of the grounds of our withdrawing, until there be evidences of their repentance, both by word and practice: And this we do for conscience sake, desiring to adhere to our sworn covenants, and to adhere to our sworn-unto work of Reformation, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, for the breaking down and disowning of which, the foresaid ministers will be found guilty, while they preached on those terms; for they were not found to declare faithfully for our sworn-unto work of reformation, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government; neither could they, because their practice said the contrary. And therefore in conscience, when we saw their deceitful dealing, we could not join with them, lest we should strengthen their hands in their defection; and therefore we hope we may be ex-
onered

erred in withdrawing from these, lest likewise we be found guilty in the transgression : But at that time the Lord stirred up some to witness faithfully against all these usurpations and encroachments upon Christ's prerogatives, and against their brethren that complied with the design of the enemies, therefore out of conscience of duty we joined with those who witnessed faithfully and freely, even to the laying down of their lives, when called to it. And for others of the ministers, the cause of our withdrawing from them, was, Because they joined not with their brethren, but left the work in the heat of the day, and left their brethren to the violence of the enemy, and left their poor flock to be devoured of ravenous wolves, the sad effects of which is seen this day ; and they have followed the example of the prophet *Jonah*, so that when they should have taken their lives in their hands ; as he went to *Tarshish* when he should have declared the Lord's message to Nineveh ; so they, when they should have declared the Lord's message to his poor suffering people, they left the work, and went to the following a way of self-preservation and safety,—and from following of their duty, which we testify against by our withdrawing, ay, and until they repent, and be set to the work again, as may be found consistent with Presbyterian principles ; and then, and not till then, we shall desire to join with them with all our hearts, as what we shall say afterwards will clear. This is, in short, for our vindication, and these are some of the grounds of our withdrawing. And he who knoweth the secrets of all hearts, knoweth that we are most sadly reproached, and falsely blamed as schismatics and erroneous, as any unbiassed Christian may see ; and what we do, we do it out of zeal for our Lord and Master's work, which is trampled upon by his avowed enemies, and slipped from by many professed friends.

And now, we, who are the poor suffering people of the Lord, in all humility, and out of the zeal of our hearts, in thirsting for the pure ordinances of God, and to clear ourselves of the fore-mentioned aspersions, Do invite you who are the Presbyterian ministers of the church of Scotland, and who were as dear to us as our own hearts, while ye continued faithful in delivering your Master's embassy ; we say, we invite you in our Master's name ; if ye have any love to him, to us, and to others, who we hope are the sheep and lambs of
Christ's

Christ's flock, to come out after your manner, and preach the gospel, and administer the sacraments, according to your former entry by the well constitute church, as it was established in the year 1648, which was according to the word of God, reformed in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, from Popery, Prelacy, and all that hierarchy, according to our sworn covenants, and according to the acts of our General Assemblies,—to preach the gospel in season and out of season, rightly dividing the word, with application to the public sins of the times, and particular sins of the auditory, parishes, and country-sides where ye preach: For we declare unto you, many of you have been guilty, and have stumbled many, by your dark and ambiguous speeches, especially since Bothwel: you have not declared for the sworn covenants, nor against the supremacy of men who have encroached upon, and usurped over the prerogatives of our Lord and Master; and have not testified against the sinful bond after the break at Bothwel; we mean that bond that engaged those who took it, not to defend their mother church, according to our covenant-engagements; and that bond that was given in for the ministers peaceable behaviour. This was the betraying of your trust; and most basely yielding up the government of Christ's house into the hands of his slated and avowed enemies. This many of you have been guilty of, even unto the weakening of your brethrens hands that durst not do so; and many of you have been silent, and have not declared against the usurpers, nor against your brethren who have strengthened their hands, but have connived at their miscarriages, when ye should have been standing upon the watch-tower, according to that scripture in Ezek. iii. 17. *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel, therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me: when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his way, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.* The apostle Paul had that to say, Acts xx. 26. *Wherefore I take you to record, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare all the counsel of God.*

Therefore, dear Friends, ye may pose your own consciences, whether or not ye may say so, that ye are pure from the blood of all men, or of many poor souls that

are joining with the courses of the time this day, for want of faithful warning.

Now, dear Friends, and sometime highly honoured of the Lord, in carrying his embassy, ponder these things, and consider the case of the scattered flock, and many famishing souls up and down the land, who are carried aside with the courses of the time. Now come forth in the Lord's name, and let no more differences be betwixt us and you: an union in the Lord we desire, but not else. And now we shall give you an account of our principles. We adhere to the holy scriptures of truth, and to our sworn Covenants, National and Solemn League, the Confession of Faith, Catechisms larger and shorter, the Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties, which are all consonant to the Scriptures: We likewise adhere to the protesting party, their protesting against the malignant interest; the owning of which we think is no small cause of the Lord's controversy with the land: so that both you and we have been *filled with our own devices*; which we cannot say, but we were guilty of, in setting (or consenting to the setting) of the crown upon the head of the chief of malignants, for which the Lord is punishing us this day, and we have found the sad smart of their heavy hand, and are eating the fruit of our own doings; so that by their hand the precious things of our souls are taken away, our ark captivated, the glory removed from our Israel, our church laid desolate and waste, and nothing less determined, than the utter extirpation of the Presbyterian interest. And now, seeing the bad effects of the owning of that malignant party, it was thought fit by us, (and some now truly honoured martyrs) for just grounds to reject the head of the malignants, and all under him, ruling by tyranny and cruel oppression, as many instances may be given, what by spoiling and robbing, fining and confining, banishing, imprisoning, and murdering the Lord's servants, only for their adhering to their duty. So we say, we thought fit to cast them off by the testimony at Rutherglen, the Sanquhar and Lanerk declarations, to which we desire to adhere; and whatsoever aspersions may be cast upon us and the fore-mentioned renowned martyrs, we have no other design (the Lord is our witness) but maintaining and carrying on the work of reformation, as it was promoted, and carried on by our worthy ancestors (as it is aforesaid) and we desire

to have it promoted to posterity. And O dear Friends, as we said before, so we say again, Beseeching you to come out upon thir terms, adhering to what our fathers and we have done, by protestations, remonstrances and declarations, and what our faithful martyrs laid down their lives for; and if you do accept in the terms proposed, we shall through the Lord's strength concur with you in jeoparding our lives and fortunes for your encouragement, in all things we can do: for we declare to you, union in the Lord is the only desire of our souls. And now if ye have any bowels of compassion, tender the case of your mother-church, preach the word and administer the sacraments, according to your former entry, and let no more brother be against brother, Manasseh against Ephraim, and Ephraim against Manasseh: But as we are all embarked in the present persecution, we likewise may be of one mind, and of one judgment: Oh how pleasant would it be; for we may all see the sad fruits of division, every one of us weakening one anothers hands, so that many have stumbled on all hands, the sad effects of which are seen this day, the generality turning aside to comply with Prelacy upon the one hand, and some led to devilish errors and delusions on the other hand*. Let these things be pondered, and let you and us in the Lord's strength be set a work, in joint supplications, one for another, which is the desire of our souls, that the Lord may yet dwell amongst us.

Now, we have presented these things to your serious consideration: If ye will not come forth when ye see the dangerous case, and the hazard of the ruining of this poor church, to help us with your advice, and counsel anent our souls and bodies, when both are in hazard, it may be the Lord will have compassion upon us, and send us relief from another airth.

Therefore we the United Societies of the church of Scotland, do enter our Protestation against you; if ye refuse this our Call, seeing it is consonant to the scriptures and your former engagements; and bears witness against your silence, lukewarmness, and neutrality, that it may be a standing witness against your courses, and that posterity may see our innocency, and that all may see that we have no other design, but zeal for the matters of our God. And we declare we cannot join with
II you,

* By this they mean, such as were drawn away by John Gib.

you, since ye refuse upon thir terms, lest we give our assent, or at least be silent at the burial of the work of Reformation, which we pray our eyes may never see*.

To return; at the last meeting it was desired that the receipts for the money that was then distributed, should be brought to this meeting, which accordingly was done, and they satisfied therewith.

It was also appointed by the meeting, in case any letters came from London, which required an answer, that one should be written by Thomas Lining, George MacVey, and Robert Goodwin, and another by friends in Edinburgh, and both to be presented at next meeting.

The occasion of this resolution, was a letter sent by Mr. Nisbet then at London, and read at this meeting which being darkly written, they could not know well what to say to it; only they learned so much from it, that there were people there, most willing to join the Suffering Remnant in Scotland, and were desirous to know what they were doing, and that they were to write afterward, by which they would shew their mind more fully.

At this time there was a design carrying on against the present evil government, and these people mentioned in the letter, being concerned therein were desirous to know what we were doing, and intended to do. And tho' the letter did not signify so much, yet it was thought that these people who were thus concerned, were of the Independents, or Anabaptists, with whom (they standing where they are) we could not join. However it was thought fit to resolve that if any letters came from them, or concerning them, to write an answer thereto. But none coming, this resolution had no effect.

It was also resolved that no Christian-fellowship (in societies) was to be kept with any person who joined with John Gib, obstinately after the return of
Mr.

* The effect of this Call was this: these ministers being unwilling to run such an hazard, made their work after this, more than ever before, to represent these people as persons of erroneous principles, Gibbites, Republicans, Despisers of the gospel, Rejecters of lawful authority, laying sinful restrictions, and impositions upon Ministers, Erastians, &c. In a word, that they were such odious people, as had no right to call ministers. Whether this was true, and a good ground for rejecting their Call, or not, must be left with the Reader to judge.

Mr. Donald Cargill out of England:—And those who separated from the said John Gib, at that time, before they be received into fellowship, ought to be examined, and promise given by them, to give satisfaction to a Church Judicatory (when it shall please the Lord to send it) according to the degree of their offence. This conclusion, considering the circumstances of the time, was judged necessary, not only from a sense of the hainousness of the sin, and greatness of the scandal of these who joined with that vile imposture; but also, thereby to endeavour to take off the *ODIUM* cast upon us, that we were all of Gib's principles, when they might see that we carried so toward them who had been involved in that shame, and that the persons themselves might be the more convinced of the evil of their way.

Moreover it was desired that every one of the fellowships that sends Commissioners to General Meetings, would be conscientious in choosing of them orderly, and also those who are found to be best qualified for judging of matters treated of in these meetings. The rise of this conclusion was, that it was found that some societies sent only such persons as could have best occasion to come, without respect to their qualifications: And therefore to prevent this in time coming the meeting agreed upon this.

In like manner it was appointed by them, that no letters concerning the public, or public declarations or protestations, be written, spread, or published, by any person, or persons whatsoever (of our societies) untill the same be presented to the General Meeting, that it may be considered by them; whether it were necessary to publish them, or not. That which occasioned this resolution to be made was, not only some persons had published papers, no ways necessary, nor incumbent for them to do, and in which, there were things which could not be justified, whereby, others were reproached, and misrepresented; but also, it was feared others might be published, that might tend to the prejudice of the cause, and the reproach of its owners; to prevent which, this conclusion was fallen upon.

Some of the meeting, having enquired if there were any letters from friends abroad; it was remembered that there was one come lately, but not brought there. However, the sum of the letter was signified to them, which was to this effect: That friends abroad desired they

should choose another young man, to send over to the rest of the students, who were then at *Groningen*. Upon which, it was enquired whether they thought it ought to be done, or not, if one could be got; all judged it to be duty, and a young man likewise was condescended upon, *viz.* Thomas Lining, who being called, the Preses of the meeting desired of him that he would be free with them, and tell them what he was inclined unto. He answered to this purpose: friends, seeing ye require this at my hand, I shall freely tell you, my mind hath been, and yet is, to follow my learning; nevertheless, I am at the meetings disposal in so far as may tend to the public good. After he had thus shewed his mind, it was objected by some that he could not be granted, upon several considerations; whereupon after hearing, and weighing the same, it was concluded that he should stay, till it should be seen what became of John Smith, in *Glasgow*, who was then upon his death-bed, and in the mean time to wait upon, and learn some young men at school, until it was known whether or not Andrew Young returned to them, who had been teaching some of them. This Thomas Lining condescended to do.

Also it was agreed upon, that in regard we heard that there were some young men abroad a letter should be written to friends, desiring them to make trial, concerning any of these young men's qualifications, and if found rightly qualified, that he be chosen for the fore-said end.

At this, and other meetings there were several things spoken unto and considered, and also some resolutions concerning the same, which were occasionally brought before them, various ways: As when there was any thing that any of the societies reckon faulty, and a grievance, whereof others of the United Societies were guilty, and they desiring it might be helped, it was thought fit to represent the same to the General Meeting, that they might fall upon some way for the redressing thereof; as also, when matters fell out among any of them, or concerning particular persons, which they could not, or knew not how to order among themselves; in that case it was judged fit to represent the same to the said meeting, that they might get their advice how to carry therein; and in like manner, when any society, or particular person of them had any proposals, one or more, to make, which might tend to the advantage of the cause, and of some,

or of the whole of the United Societies; then it was thought requisite to make it known to the meeting desiring their judgment of it, and concurrence, if they agreed therewith. Some of these matters, as above circumstantiate, being signified to this meeting, they did consider and give their mind concerning the same, as the following relation will shew.

It was given in as a grievance by one, to be considered by this meeting, that notwithstanding of resolutions made by former meetings; yet there was little notice taken, whether they were observed in some things, as for instance, it was resolved at one of them, that every respective Society should provide themselves in arms, according to their power and station: yet this was not observed by some, which was a disregarding of what that meeting did therein. Upon this it was thought fit to enquire at the Commissioners, if they and their societies had observed it, in providing themselves with arms; which was done not only at these who were sitting, but at these standing by. And there were several found not to have observed the said resolution; whereupon it was desired that every Commissioner should acquaint these of the societies they came from who had not done it, to observe the foresaid resolution, for neglect of which, they deserved a rebuke: And if they further slighted it, they should be looked upon, as contemners of the meeting's resolutions; this they all promised to do.

It was likewise desired by some, that the meeting might show their mind, and give their advice concerning the paying of stipends to the Curates, whereof some persons (in society) had at that time the temptation: The Preses enquired what the meeting thought thereof, and whether they judged it a duty, or a sin, and so a head to suffer on. In giving an answer there was a distinction made, that there might be an indirect, as well as a direct paying thereof. As when a tenant is bound by his tack, to pay his master so much money for his land he possesseth, and the way he is to make use thereof is not declared by the tack; but only all as the rent of the land; in that case the tenant was not to be blamed, tho' his master gave as much of his rent as he pleased to the Curate: But when a man is bound by his tack to pay to the Curate, or Bishop, so much money, abstract from the rest of his master's duty, in that case, the tenant was blame wor by, and it was agreed unto, by all the meeting,

ing, that they looked upon the same to be a sin, and a head to suffer on; but withal they thought that the tenant should not make his own use of that money, but give it in, for the public use.

Another thing was represented at this meeting and their advice sought, and, that they might endeavour to take it away, which was concerning an engagement made among some persons a few years ago, at a season, when there was a tentation of paying cess, locallity, and militia-money, in this manner: That if any one, or more of them should suffer loss at the hands of enemies, for not paying of these impositions; in that case, each one of these according to their power were to make up their loss: And the losers were to bear a proportion in the same, that is to say, the first losers, were to lose as much as those who were to make them up.

After this transaction, most-part of these that engaged therein, complied with the courses of the time, and paid the foresaid impositions: which occasioned debates among them that did not comply, for some of them sustaining loss for refusing to pay: And as upon the one hand, it was alledged by the losers, the non-complying party, were only alledged to make up their loss, seeing they had not freedom to seek it from those who had complied with the enemy; even suppose they had been willing to pay it, they having broken their engagement: So, on the other hand, the persons that complied not, and had suffered no loss, alledged they were obliged to pay only according to what their proportion would have been, if the whole of these who entered into the engagement had continued firm.

This business was signified to another meeting, who appointed some persons to endeavour the composing thereof, but they not getting it done, it was represented to this meeting; to whose determination both parties were willing to stand: whereupon they having considered, whether the non-complying party, or these who had complied, ought to make up the loss: After deliberation, they concluded (in regard redress at the time could not be got from the compliers, but left to a more convenient season) these who had not complied, should make up the loss sustained by those who refused to pay the foresaid imposition; seeing if they failed therein, they would also be breakers of their engagement.

It was also, proposed by some of the meeting, what would be the duty of the United Societies, if (as was much to be feared) there should be a massacre by Papists in the land; and whether or not, they should gather themselves together for the defence and safety of their own, their wives and children's lives; this was condescended on by all to be duty, if it could be gotten done.

Then it was enquired what would be the most probable way to effectuate it. After deliberation, it was judged most convenient, that in the case foresaid, every three or four societies lying nearest together, should appoint a place most fit for a meeting; as also, that there should be a place for the whole to convene at; which after consideration was agreed upon, to be at *Carntable*: And to the end they might be in greater readiness to come, and fitness to defend themselves when together, it was concluded that some societies which were nearest together, should meet in some convenient place, for learning the exercise of war, and persons most skilled made choice of to teach them, until they come to the public place of meeting, and there choice to be made without partiality, of persons to teach and conduct the rest.

It was likewise represented to the meeting by some, that they thought the lively exercise of religion was much marred through the not propounding of questions, and cases of conscience at Society Meetings: which being thought by the whole meeting to have done much hurt, Therefore it was concluded, that every Commissioner should show this to their society, that it may be helped in time coming.

It was also enquired by some, if the oath of secrecy stood yet, in its binding force; to which was answered, it did. However it was thought expedient to alter some words therein, viz. in place of *indirectly*, to put in *wittingly* and *willingly*. And these words *persons from whom I am commissioned*, to be put out, and instead thereof, *except it be to friends*. At this time there were some persons taken engaged to the said oath.

Moreover it was proposed by some, that it seemed necessary to have a word, among all these joined in society, if the meeting could condescend upon it; to the end that these who are wandering through the country, might know one another: And for preventing the making known what was among us, to persons wandering, but not in society; which being done, tho' not wittingly, might do hurt in this juncture. After deliberation this

was thought fit to be done. Whereupon it was agreed by the Preses, and one sitting next him who told the same to another, and so it went through the whole persons in the house privately. This being done, the Preses enquired, if they were all content with the word, (which was REFORMATION) it was answered they were. Then every Commissioner was desired to impart it to the society he came from.

Finally it was concluded that the 2d of March, should be kept as a fast by all our societies, upon the account of our former abuse and neglect of the gospel. And also to intreat of the Lord that whatsoever ministers might accept of the call, might do it from a right principle, and also have a right end in the same.

Likewise that the 5th of April may be observed as a fast upon these accounts, first to mourn for the several jars that have been among us: Also to seek light and direction how to carry anent matters against the next meeting, which was to meet upon the 2d of May at Carntable.

After the meeting was parted and most part gone a little distance from the place, a young man, who had come out of Edinburgh with letters from friends abroad, met some of them; upon which, all that could be gotten together of them, were called together again, before whom the letters were read; and after deliberation concerning the same, it was resolved, that Robert Goodwine, Alexander Gordon, John Smith, William Nairn, and Thomas Lining should answer the said letters, and therein desire Earlistoun to return to this land against the middle of April next; in regard that several weighty affairs called for his being present at the next General Meeting.

THE case of the country since the last meeting was much like as it was before it, enemies went on in prosecuting their wicked designs, and cruelly persecuting all dissenters, and in particular the Societies. The last meeting being got notice of by the enemy, a party of enraged soldiers came presently out and spoiled the house, where it was kept, and apprehended some persons in the country. But albeit persecution be unpleasant to flesh and blood, yet it would have been easier and lighter to the Societies, if they had not, had other things in their cup, which made it more bitter. Upon the one hand they

they wanted the benefit of the gospel, the enjoyment whereof, being an unspeakable advantage, and will be reckoned to be so by every one who have got the blessing thereof, even though it should be with the peril of their lives: And upon the other hand being before hand called Schismatics and Separatists, for their withdrawing in that broken and declining state of the church, from several ministers guilty of defection: And now after the last meeting more misrepresented by some on the account of the call.

ACCORDING to the appointment of the last meeting, a General Meeting met at *Carntable*, upon the 2d day of May, 1683. After prayer, and modelling of the meeting, the resolutions of the former meeting were read and approved: But in regard *Earlstoun* (according to the desire of the meeting) was to come to this land, and was at the time, at *Edinburgh*. It was thought most fit and expedient, to go there and keep the meeting, that they might have him with them; whereupon it was agreed that the same should be at *Edinburgh*, upon the 8th of May at night; and thereafter this meeting parted.

ACCORDING to the conclusion above, the General Meeting met at *Edinburgh* upon the 8th of May. After prayer, *Alexander Gordon* of *Earlstoun* being present, gave them a full account of his diligence abroad. And they were extraordinarily well satisfied with all his proceedings, as having a manifest tendency to the glory of God, and the good of the Remnant. And in evidence of their satisfaction, he was continued to go further on in his commission. There were several things spoken of, and some resolutions agreed upon, an account of which shall be here related.

1st, It was resolved that a conjunct commission should be drawn, including *Alexander Gordon*, with *Robert Hamilton* that they might go further abroad, to give information of our state and condition to other Protestant churches. And also a particular commission, to each of them, in case it should be needful that they went not together: And one, or both to return when necessity required; providing they received a call from the meeting, for that effect. These commissions being drawn up, were, with some papers, delivered to *Earlstoun*; who presently after the meeting, took journey for *Newcastle*;

and having agreed with the master of a ship, for his voyage to Holland, just as the ship was setting out from Tyne-mouth, it was accidentally stopt, and some waiters coming aboard, *Earlstoun* and Edward Aitken (who was along with him) were challenged, by them; and they perceiving themselves to be in danger, and fearing the seizure of the papers which *Earlstoun* had, threw them over board, to the end they might sink, but the box in which they were, floating, were soon taken up. Among which, were the foresaid commissions. Upon this, they were both apprehended, and carried prisoners to *Newcastle*, and put in *Newgate*, and thereafter brought to Scotland.

2dly, It was resolved by the meeting, that *Michael Shields* should stay at Edinburgh, and wait for letters from the post-house, which might be sent from friends abroad; and write any convenient answers to them, that should be requisite for him to do. And it was resolved that *Thomas Lining* should wait upon the more public meetings, and translate any letters that should come to them in Latin.

3dly, It was resolved that Mr. John Binning should be desired to wait upon a school, for teaching some young men; and for his pains he was to have twenty-five pounds Scots *per quarter*. These named at the meeting, were John Williamson, James Bool, John Dick, Benjamin Hall, Gavin Wotherspoon junr. Edward Aitken, John Dalgleish, David Gibson, John Campbell, and Robert Millar. According to this resolution, Mr. Binning did teach Latin to some of these young men for some time.

4thly, It was in like manner resolved by them, upon the account of the designs of some, and the rashness of others, that no persons (of our societies) should draw together in a public manner of rising in arms, except it be for necessary self-defence, and deliverance of our brethren, because thereby we could do nothing but render ourselves a prey to the enemy, if not a marr to the Lord's work; and this was also the mind of friends both at home, and abroad, until the Lord by his word and Spirit, should give us and them further light therein. The end of this resolution was to put a stop to the rashness to appear in arms, of some persons in our societies, who had shown much forwardness in that matter before, which would have tended in that juncture, to the exposing of them and others to the fury of the enemy. As
also,

also, if there had been a public rising in arms against the present evil government, as was then expected would be, with which, the societies would have been solicited to concur; a stop would be put to the rash appearance of any of them, and to their joining with such with whom we could not associate; of whom there would have been not a few. But as the societies were resolved to oppose the common enemy, so in doing of it, it was their desire that it should be with common consent, unanimity, and avoiding sinful associations.

5thly, A paper was agreed unto by this meeting, containing the reasons of several of our actions, which was intended to be given in to the Confederators, wherein is somewhat of our mind anent, and a protestation against their sinful associations. That which gave the rise, and occasion to this resolution, was this; there was a design carrying on against the present tyrannical government, by several persons in both kingdoms. And the societies were not against the opposing, and endeavouring to overturn the said tyranny: Yet they were against that promiscuous association with men of blood, profanity, and malignancy, as also with Sectarians, which was at that time on foot for effectuating thereof. Whereupon knowing that their concurrence would be desired in the said association, they thought it necessary to draw up this paper, to shew their mind concerning, and witness against sinful association*. As likewise to take occasion therein, to vindicate a little, some of our former actings which were much condemned. Which paper was given to Earlston, that he might have delivered it to some persons at London, concerned in the association, that so it might have been made public; but when that gentleman was apprehended, it was seized among the rest of the papers: A true copy of which follows.

The reasons of the sufferings and actings of the true (though greatly reproached, and persecuted) Presbyterian, Anti-Prelatick, Anti-Erastian Party in SCOTLAND.

I. 2

WE

* The Reader may compare this, and what follows, with the principles and practices of the far greatest number of these, five or six years thereafter; as they were much blamed, as having relinquish'd their former principles: it must therefore be the duty of every one to judge, whether their former, or later principles and practices be most agreeable to the word of God.

WE cannot but sadly regret in the very entry, the occasions of such vindications, as we are forced to make in this critical age, wherein for the most part, all true principles of government and religion are like to be overturned: And when any are contending for these, they are immediately branded as enemies to government and magistracy, one of the most excellent ordinances of God, when kept within its due bounds and limits set down by him in his word; and when made use of for the ends proposed therein. This we say we have reason to regret, yet it ought not to discourage any, or deter them from that which we are bound unto; although many have been whedled out of both reason and religion, yet this makes us put pen to paper, that thereby these who are honestly principled as to both, may be strengthened, and we vindicated: So that when the grounds are laid down, and procedures laid to the rule, it may be seen whose courses are most aberrant, or differing therefrom.

Therefore we shall touch upon some of these heads which are most carped at by our enemies.

1st, The first grand business is the casting off the Tyrant's authority, and the power to middle therewith, and what a length we stretch that power: As for the manner of the doing thereof, it is narrated in the Lanerk Declaration, so we shall not touch thereon, but as a preamble shall narrate somewhat of the grounds upon which we walked. First, it is an undoubted principle amongst all states-men, that in a general defection, these who in that nation adheres closest to the ancient laws, liberties, and constitutions, are the truest and most free-born subjects; for laws being made for the government of the whole nation, every member within the same, prince, people are equally obliged thereto, and in all breaches upon either hand recourse must be had to the rule. This is not denied by any sound states-men, and contradicted by none, Barelay and other court Parasites excepted: Yea it is so clear, that nature taught Heathens themselves, from whom we have our civil laws, that they never gave their princes more, yea the princes themselves required no more, but thought it their greatest honour to be subject to the laws, as can be clearly seen in the whole body of the civil law. But why should we go thus far? (if it were not to answer such quibblers in their own coin) for if we look to the constitutions set down
by

by God in his word, we will find all alongst that the laws are to be the supreme judge, whereby the actions of both magistrates and people are to be judged; and where magistrates and rulers walked contrary thereto, the opposing of them, and revolting from under them, are approved by God; and where they were not revolted from, nor testified against, but joined with, and homologate; we find at such times their sins charged upon the people, and the people plagued therefore*.

This being considered, gave sufficient ground to us in the most legal and public way possible; (that as our sin was public, our contrary testimony might be also public) this, we say, gave the occasion to us to testify against, resist, and reject the authority, the exercise of which was tyranny, oppression and usurpation, in matters civil and ecclesiastic, as we have done by our declarations and testimonies. But whereas some are pleased to say that we assume the legislative power of the nation, and the power of Parliaments to us.—We declare, all that we have done, or are doing in that kind, is but merely to make our testimony and procedure against the present course of affairs more legal and strong; that as we have had an eminent and public hand in the sin, and setting up the idol of jealousy, so we may have an eminent and public hand in pulling of it down: And when it shall please the Lord to send us well-constitute judicatories, we shall desire to have, or assume no more but our privileges, in our places and stations, as free born subjects.

Secondly, As to the grounds of our not joining with ministers and professors, or others, who have made defection, we have much to say, which would be tedious, and rather the work of a volume, than of such a paper; but we think they may be very easily reduced to this rule, which was our ancient rule all along, and ought still to continue yet: When joining with persons in the exercise of worship or otherwise, implies a homologating of, or joining with the public sins whereof they are guilty, there we ought to foot a stand, and not to join, because the joining is tainted with their guilt, and so sinful; for no sin ought to be joined with, but avoided: But where it does not homologate, nor can no-ways be tainted

* They who would see this proved, may consult Hind let loose, and others.

tainted with the guilt, there we have freedom to join. But this we ought to retort upon the heads of our adversaries, for they are the separatists, and not we; for it is the offenders and not the offended, that only best deserve that name.

Thirdly, As to our making the work of Reformation, and particularly our covenants and late public declarations, and martyrs testimonies on scaffolds, a test, or mark whereby we may know one another, we esteem ourselves to have good ground so to do; for the work of reformation, and the several steps thereof, from Popery to this day, are such a linked chain, that there are none that can disown the testimonies of our martyrs, either former or latter, (being considered, every one according to the particular times and seasons when, and dispensations under which they were given) but he must certainly disown the whole; for it hath pleased the Lord to make their strain run all one way, and not cross to one another; whereby it may be evidently seen, that they have been all dictated by one spirit. Always hereby declaring, we own only the true testimonies, excluding some particular testimonies vitiate by Gib and others, since there may be errors on the one hand as well as on the other: Those, we say, being excluded, we know nothing, nor desire to own nothing that is contrary to scripture and sound reason.

Fourthly, We know likewise, that it hath been scrupled at, our refusing to join issue and interest, or in arms with a malignant party, carrying on malignant designs; however under cunningly busked colours and pretexts, which when searched, are, and have been found out to be but meer cheating or betraying the true cause of God in the land, as we have by sad experience found and smarted for; for we never yet took in, or strove to connive at, or palliate that malignant interest, but the Lord shewed evident marks against us: and they are so clearly confuted by the passage of Jehoshaphat, and many other passages in scripture, that we need not take great pains to strike that nail to the head; for our remonstrances, *Mr. Gillespie*, and many others, have redd marches so well, that they have left nothing for us to do, but to put our seals to what they have left on record: Neither are we looking for, or expecting an army all of saints, for there will be tares among the wheat, while the time of reaping come: But if we (after the

Lord's so eminently discharging) take in the Canaanites into our bosoms, who have made *thorns in our eyes, and scourges in our sides* : If we (we say) shall confederate with these, and give them places of trust and office with us, whom he has so eminently appeared against, we cannot expect but he will whip us with taws of our own making, since we will not follow his method. And we desire to shew all the lovers of Zion, that whosoever confederates with these men of blood and bloody practices, we have just ground to fear that the helpers and the holpen will fall together ; and we desire to testify against all such confederacies and associations, in the name of the once glorious church of Scotland, these being none of her principles, to take in men against whom the sword of justice should have free course. Therefore whatever shall be acted or done by such confederacies or associations, that no churches, neither foreign nor neighbouring, attribute or ascribe the same to the true church and nation of Scotland, whose laws both of church and state being so just, as that they could not admit them to live, much less to rule or officiate, being men of such wicked practices, destructive not only to religion, but civil society.

Earlstoun brought two letters from Mr. William Brackel, directed to the societies, one of them dated, *Feb. 19th*, the other, *March 14th*, 1683. Both which, being written in Latin were translated into English, and read at this meeting, to which they were acceptable and encouraging ; and it was thought fit by them, to write one to him. Which being done, agreed unto, and subscribed, was given to *Earlstoun*, that he might deliver it to Mr. Brackel, but the same was seized on, when *Earlstoun* was apprehended, with several other papers.

However, a true copy hereof follows ; as also a part of Mr. Brackel's letter, dated *February 19th*, the same being suitable to the condition of these people to whom he wrote ; which I have thought fit first to set down, and then the letter by the meeting to him.

Most loving fathers and brethren in Christ Jesus our glorious King,

IT is not only come to my ears that ye wrote, and sent to me a letter of answer, but also a copy of it is come

come to my hand ; but where itself sticks, or by whom intercepted, I know not.

It rejoiceth my soul greatly to know your affairs both by the foresaid copy, and also by your letters sent to us ; especially the miraculous divine protection of you makes me both greatly to admire and rejoice ; who being courageous and busied in your convention, by taking a care of your church-affairs, did see the cruel enemies even threatening death, seeking you, even compassing about the house, stricken with a certain *Sodomitish* blindness that they could not enter.

How admirable are the works of God ! how unsearchable is his deep goodness ! truly we find that he hath favour and mercy towards his saints, and perpetual care towards the elect ; truly he is a fiery wall about Jerusalem, and his angels compass about those that fear him, and delivers them. He that sits under the covert of the Most High, shall lodge under the shadow of him that is omnipotent. Let praise and glory be sung to our Lord, by all who hear these things, both angels and men. It is needful that this experience of the most efficacious presence of God should strengthen your confidence ; that he who delivered you out of the mouth of bear and lion, shall also in the time to come deliver you from all dangers that shall fall in your lot, to the glory of his waited-for divine defence. But if God should suffer this or that man, or even many, to fall into the hands of enemies, or rather that he himself should give them ; by this ye shall be taught experience, that that has not fallen out because of the defect of divine protection, but that God has called them out, name by name, for a testimony of himself ; yea, although they should seem to die in the eyes of enemies, and their end to be an ignominious affliction, yet they, I say, go away in peace, and are crowned with a joyful crown and immortality. Neither are the martyrs of the church of Scotland killed, that it may be extirpate, but that it may be builded ; for the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church : the church was founded by blood, and it grew by blood. The more cruelly Pharaoh oppressed the people of God, the more fertile they were multiplied. We are very desirous of the coming of the Lord ; saying, we wish that *salvation may come out of Zion ; when the Lord shall turn again the captivity of his people, Jacob shall be glad, and Israel shall rejoice.* But let no man cast down his heart, because
 God

God is only trying your patience ; he is also making our way plain, and a way to himself, to his greater glory in all lands. Would Israel been more happy if he had been delivered out of less oppression in Egypt ? Was not his deliverance the more glorious, the heavier the persecution was ? Wait therefore for the salvation of the Lord : how great shall his goodness be *which he hath laid up for them that fear him*, which he hath prepared for those that betake themselves to him, before the sons of men. Shew yourselves men in the time of distress. Let him that is weak in strength, leaning upon his head, say, I am a man of excellent valour. He that hath God near unto him (as is made known to you by many, both public and private experiences) from no man would fear either threatenings, swords or ropes. Learned men, great men, albeit godly, of great name, err in this matter ; but God hath chosen these that were fools in the world, as wise ; those that were weak, as strong ; the ignoble, and those of no esteem, that he might bring to disgrace those who are in honour. In the mean time, let unanimity, love, fervency of mind, gladness in justification remain among you ; and out of these, holiness, and a perpetual intercourse of the soul with God. This one thing I exhort you, that every one may teach another ; the fathers, mothers, aged and more learned, may teach the little ones, and others who are more ignorant of the way of the Lord, the fundamentals of religion ; lest any should perish thro' lack of knowledge, or lest any should waver in the true faith.

The three students chosen by you to the pastoral office are busy at their studies ; the fourth we are waiting for : By God's grace we hope you shall see them the next year, and hear them preaching.

Since the time that I have known your estate, I have judged it necessary that certain men, endued with the Holy Ghost, piety, authority and years, should be chosen for the pastoral office, and should be sent unto us, for the space of one or two months, that they might be instructed in the method of forming of preachings, and some other things. Next that they should be examined in a lawful way by some pastor in an ecclesiastic convention, (let not little knowledge deter any man) and in the name of the Lord sent unto his vineyard, and be confirmed in that office by the imposition of hands ; and so return to you in such a state of the church. I care

not much for the knowledge of tongues, and literal instruction, although in itself, in other circumstances I think much of it; for not by the defect of learning, but of the Spirit and piety, is the church of Scotland brought into so miserable a condition; and I think it is not to be restored by learning, but by the Spirit and piety. I propose thir things to you, that you may seriously consider that thing of so great moment; and that ye may either do or reject that as ye shall think fit. The Lord be a sun and shield unto you. And, I am,

Your lover, and promoted minister,

FEB. 9th, 1683.

WILLIAM BRACKEL.

Here follows the letter to MR. BRACKEL.

Right reverend Sir,

THE receipt of your first letter did not a little encourage us to set about the duties of the day, and to hold on in the way of the Lord. We cannot well excuse our long silence in not writing to you, (unto whom we are so much obliged) but when we consider the first part of your letter, which contains so much of self-denial, and a commendation put upon us, far above our deserving, it puts us to a stand what to write: And more so, when we essay to put pen to paper; we see so much weakness in ourselvies, that we fear our letters (when written) be little to the edification of either you or others: But knowing you to be such, as can pass by the infirmities of the weak; (according to the example of the apostle *Paul*) together with your ardent desire to know our state, makes us (though in weakness) write this line to you. We wrote an answer to it before, and sent it by post, but we hear the same has been intercepted, and not come to your hand, but only a copy; we received also another letter of the date *February 19th*, (comfortable and refreshing to us indeed) and your last of the date *March 14th*, from *Earlshoun*, one of our honourable commissioners, whose presence has not been a little refreshing to us under our present distresses and labyrinths of difficulties; together with the heart-comforting and hand-strengthening account he has given of the Lord's condescending to us in our low condition, when we were become

become as strangers, and aliens in our mother's house, to raise up fathers, brothers and sisters to us in a strange land, who give such eminent proofs of their being so to us, by their accepting and welcoming of our message; and also, by their fatherly care of, and kindness to our honourable commissioners, and the students sent by us; and also that worthy lady † and her children, who could not get rest for the sole of their feet in their own native country. For which, and the like eminent favours we acknowledge ourselves altogether (out of a capacity to render a recompence, and therefore must remain debtors; only we desire to believe, that our Lord who has conferred such favours upon us, will also accomplish his promise, who hath said, *He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward*: This Letter, we say, has occasioned great joy in the hearts of all (especially that part which concerns the coming home of the students) who are truly longing to hear the found of the feet of these who bring the glad tidings of salvation. This is a ground of encouragement for us to hope that our God is returning to covenanted Scotland, to ride prosperously on the white horse of the gospel, conquering and to conquer; and to be head and king over his church. We acknowledge the goodness and mercy of the Lord in this to be very great, in *remembering us in our low condition*, and in opening a door of hope in this manner (*all praise and glory be to him for it*) when all other doors seemed to be shut, refuges failed us upon the right and left hand, to learn us not to look to the hills and mountains for salvation, (which alas! we have too much done) but unto himself. O noble exercise! to be looking unto, and depending upon the Lord for all things, both spiritual and temporal; for what want we but he hath to give? and not only hath to give, but is willing to give to such as seek in faith. And also we acknowledge the Lord's goodness in raising you up to be instrumental in this great work, (for which ye will not want your reward) and we count ourselves greatly indebted to you, (much honoured of the Lord) for which, and all other favours conferred by you upon us, we give you and the godly with you, hearty thanks.

K 2

Now

† This was lady Earsteun.

Now we shall give you (dear Sir) a short hint of our case and condition at the time. Once it might have been said of this church, *that she looked forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners* : We had the light of the glorious gospel : we were made to drink the pure blood of the grape ; and the sons of the alien were made our plowmen ; we gave away ourselves in covenant to be the Lords. But alas ! we have left our first love ; we that once were the head, are now become the tail, and these to whom we were a terror, are become a terror to us : *Our crown is fallen from our head, wo unto us that we have sinned* : We have fallen by our iniquity ; we have sinned away the precious gospel, the food of our souls ; and the blessed Comforter that should relieve us, is withdrawn : Our enemies are strong, and increasing within and without, and on every hand. These things should not only be matter of mourning and lamentation to us before the Lord, but even to all the truly godly who hear of them. Therefore we desire and invite all the lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ, not to be among the number of the passers-by, and of them that care for none of these things ; but sincerely to sympathize with us, and lay out our case before the Lord, and plead with him in our behalf, that he would *yet arise and have mercy on Zion, and let the time to favour her come*. O noble work ! this cause has prevailed and will prevail ; for all that we have been, are, or may be trusted with from cruel enemies or pretended friends, yet we have no reason to complain ; we are punished less than our iniquity deserves : *Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins* . Yea we have ground to say, *The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, we have a goodly heritage* : We are honoured with a noble privilege, to be counted worthy to suffer shame and reproach, robbing, spoiling and martyring for the name of precious CHRIST,—whereas many have ardently desired to give a proof of their love this way, and have not obtained it : For well is that word made out in our days, *He sends none a warfare upon their own charges*. Why should we fear, since he hath promised to be with us both in the fire and in the water ? Who would not suffer with him that they may reign with him ? Since there is a cross laid down at every one's door by our Lord, why should we not take it up, and bear it for his sake, and follow him whithersoever he goes ?

goes? for he hath bought a blessing to crosses at a dear rate; *our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory.* O! noble, and weighty crown of glory, that they who endure to the end get! Here is enough though we be under persecution all our days, and though the yoke of oppression, be wreathed faster about our necks: it sets us to be silent, and not to quarrel at his dispensations, though they seem dark: And though he should cause us all to fall in the wilderness for our murmurings and quarrelings with him; what is the matter, if he be glorified? Let us die in the faith of it, that he will have a Remnant, in whom he will be glorified, and a seed to serve him in this land, and that he will return, and dwell among them.

This is indeed an evil time, even a time of Jacob's trouble; but here is comfort, he shall be saved out of it, and the yoke shall be broken from off his neck, and his bands will be burst, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. And though it be said at this time, that Zion is an out-cast, whom no man seeketh after, yet our Lord has promised to restore health unto her, and heal her of her wounds. And we may say, to the commendation of his grace, he hath not left us comfortless, for he is pleased to go with us through the fire, and through the waters, so that we might (if we could either write, or speak) invite all, to come and behold what wondrous works the Lord hath shown to us, and among us, that there need none be afraid to venture upon the like, or worse sufferings than these which we have seen, and are put to, since we can say it now from experience, that he bears us and our burdens both. And we desire to put a blank in his hand for the future, and say, Amen, to it, if he see it fit, for the further manifestation of the glory of his free grace, and power, to heat our furnace yet seven times hotter, if one, like the Son of man be with us in it, we have enough.

And dear Sir, since your letters hitherto, have been so refreshing and comfortable, in our sorrowful and distressed case; we hope ye will yet be pleased to confer that favour upon us, as to write, and let us hear from you, both for counsel, and encouragement, for we are hopeful the more that ye give of this-kind, ye shall get the more to give.

Thus

Thus recommending you to his grace, who walks among the candlesticks, and holds the stars in his right hand; We remain your, &c.

Subscribed in our name, and at our appointment by &c.

It was appointed by the meeting, that the 22d of May, the 15th of June, and 13th of July, should be kept by our Societies, in prayer; and the next meeting to be at Carntable upon August 1st, to which the collections were to be brought.

Not long after the last meeting, there was a design against the present evil government in England discovered, which had been carried on by many, and was then near to be put in execution, which made a great noise through the three kingdoms, and occasioned several persons to be searched for and apprehended, and some suffered on that account.

About this time fell out the apprehending of *Earl Soun*, which was not a little afflicting to the United Societies, not only upon the account of the loss of such a worthy gentleman, but also for the seizure of the papers that were drawn up, and agreed to, at the last meeting: Whereby enemies came to the knowledge of what was in them, and a stop was put to his going abroad, for the end related above; and though some endeavours were made for his rescue, out of the hands of his enemies, yet it proved unsuccessful, and he continued a prisoner a considerable time*.

ACCORDING to the appointment of the meeting before, a General Meeting did convene at *Carntable* upon the 1st of August, 1683. After prayer, and modelling of the meeting, they approved of what was done by the former meeting, and agreed upon some resolutions, as follows.

1. It was resolved by the meeting that a commission should be drawn, subscribed, and sent to *Mr. Robert Hamilton*, then at *Leewarden*, to the end he might inform Protestant reformed churches abroad of our state and condition. The last meeting agreed upon the like
com-

* To wit, till the Revolution.

commission to him, which was sent with *Earlshoun*; but he being apprehended, the same was seized, with other papers: wherefore this meeting (being very desirous to have the case they were contending and suffering for, and their sad and afflicted case made known to reformed Protestant churches, to the end they might get their sympathy) thought fit that a new one should be drawn up, which was done and sent. And it differed nothing from the former, save as to time and place*.

Likewise they agreed upon a letter to Mr. Hamilton, which was accordingly drawn up, and sent with Mr. William Nairn. A true copy of which here follows.

Much Honoured and Worthy Sir,

WE are much concerned with you, and have good reason to be, because we are sensible of your labour and pains; which you have been, and are yet at, in giving true information of the state of the Lord's quarrel, which we desire through God's strength to own. And for the better carrying on of which, we have condescended upon a particular commission to you, that thereby, as ye have been eminently active for truth already; so the glory of God, and his public (though persecuted) quarrel, may be further carried on thro' other lands, and you may be employed as a mean in that service; for although it be a heavy burden in itself, yet your God, and our God, is able sufficiently to fit and furnish you, and all whomsoever by his providence he calls to such a work and service, by giving full expences to all his servants, and a back for the burden; so we declare that no motives lead us to this, but principally the further propagation of the glory of God. And you are to act, and carry on, whatsoever work of this nature, the Lord shall put in your hand; as he shall enlighten you, according to his word, and give success in all places where ye shall travel.

Worthy Sir, the carrying on of this, is unanimously desired by your friends, and you to be employed as an instrument therein.

Much honoured Sir, This commission was by the last meeting ordained to be drawn up, which accordingly was done, subscribed, and sent by the hand of your honourable and dear brother, now in bonds for Christ.

But

* It is yet extant, in Latin.

But the Lord who orders all things well, permitted the same, with several other papers, to fall into the hands of his enemies: And as to the giving of a new one, it could not be done until this meeting: so they declare their adherence to their former resolutions, and have sent you this commission, written and subscribed in parchment; differing nothing from the former.

We received a letter from you, of the date May 24th last, wherein we see matter of rejoicing, and also of sorrow. As we have reason upon this account to rejoice and be glad, yea to sing, and give praise to our God, who is making himself known as such, and his glorious attributes of power, faithfulness, mercy, &c. to shine, in carrying on his noble cause, over the belly of so great difficulties, and owning his people so, in the managing thereof: yea the many stops that were put in the way of our dear friend's (now Christ's ambassador's) ordination, makes us hope that he is a polished shaft in our Lord's quiver, and a *Joseph* against whom the archers have forely shot, and have not prevailed, and we hope will not. So, we have also reason and ground of sorrow and lamentation, upon the account of the carriage of these two young men; but what shall we say, but stand still and behold the wondrous works of our God, who is even fitting as a refiner and purifier of silver, purifying the sons of *Levi*. It becomes us therefore to be content, though but a third part come through the fire, since it is himself, who is master of the work: it is like they will be *costly stones*, and *hewed stones*, whom our Lord will make use of, to lay the foundation of his second temple in this land.

As to that part of your letter, anent writing a protestation against the Scots church at Rotterdam: the same is thought duty: And it is concluded that you are the fittest person to draw up the same; so you are humbly desired to do it, and send the same over with the bearer to the next meeting, to be by them considered. As to other things treated of at this time, the bearer will sufficiently acquaint you, to whose information we refer you.

The meeting has desired me to acquaint you thus far, in their name. So wishing you all happiness in the Lord, I rest,

*much honoured Sir,
your most humble Servant.*

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

P. S. FRIENDS in Glasgow desired me to write to you, to send them notice what is become of the book of Mr. Cargill's, and Mr. Cameron's sermons; if it be corrected, and put to the press. And that they have another book to be sent, wherein are many choice heads of copied sermons from Mr. John Welwood's own hand.

From the honourable Mr. Robert Hamilton, to some Friends in Scotland.

Leewarden, May 24th, 1683.

Right honourable and dear Brethren,

THOUGH, as the Lord knows, I have been often made to desire and resolve upon a cottage in the wilderness, yet it has seemed good in his eyes, to have me otherways employed, and kept up, not only at home, but in all places of my pilgrimage, as a beacon on the top of a mountain, and a witness for his precious and honourable cause, interest and people, against all his and their enemies, whether country-men or strangers: and, however, my real insufficiency and great emptiness did often terrify and affright me, at first sight, to venture upon so great and so hot encounters, as I have been trusted with; yet he, in his great love and infinite condescendency, spared no pains, (as forsooth, I have been somewhat, and could have done something for him) once to allure me, and next, as it were, to give my consent to the service. And when he did let me find (O! wonder of wonders!) in some measure what he would do for his own name's sake, in abundantly furnishing, wonderfully leading on, and honourably bringing me off; that, O praise to his glorious name! he made it often, not only astonishing to myself, but admirable to onlookers, and the greatest of my enemies: for once having entered and got me to a cheerful submission, and rejoicing in his will and way, I may say, I had often no more ado, but to *stand still, and see his salvation*: and though he used his own way in correcting my untowardness and misbelief; yet, O my friends! in such a way, that the world could never discern it. O what am I, such a lump of sin, that ever was counted worthy to be so dealt with, and chastised with such sweet, sugared, and honourable rods;

no less than the golden rod wherewith our lovely Lord, heir of the inheritance, was stricken with. Courage, my honourable brethren, your chafings, wanderings, fightings, and contendings for matchless, O matchless Him! cannot but be infinitely more glorious than all the painted, crowned vanities of the world: O they bear their reward with them, that the world knows not of; and no wonder, when dealt out by such a lovely hand, and in the fight of such a noble General, who deals out to every man his post, and his blows, and furnishes accordingly; and is most concerned himself in the battle, and in the carriage of his own, that they may be all honourable, and receive the crown, and the noble preparations of eternal glory with himself through eternity, which he has laid up and purchased with his own blood. O continue, continue to the end; and he and you shall once judge the tyrants, and the furious bulls of *Bassan* here below; keep by him, and ye shall get the victory, yea, and be more than conquerors.

Now, my Christian friends, having this so noble occasion; I could not but give you some small account, as to the Lord's leading, in and through this great and last piece of service, not knowing but it may be the last edition of service to you and the land that ever I shall be honoured to perform; as also, hoping it might be for your encouraging and strengthening, and a mean to endear you to the bearer. And, I hope, through the grace of God, the great Master of the assemblies, his embassage and master-like furniture, shall be more than able to commend him unto you all. And, I have been made to think, if he might be the first stone of our new building: and indeed to some in this place, his first sermon was to them, as the laying the foundation of the second temple, *weeping and rejoicing*. But however it be, I hope the Lord shall get great glory by it, and yet more and more approve, as he hath hitherto done in a wonderful way. But,

As to the Lord's preparing and leading me on to this work, it was thus: He hath been pleased sometimes (praise, O praise to his name!) to condescend to me a poor worm, to let me see something of his stately goings and managements in this day, as his working out of his most noble and most intricate pieces of service, through poor despised means and feckless instruments, and that both of the ministers and others; as also, his most glo-

rious victories obtained of the enemies, when seemingly they were most conquering; as also, making many as prophets in and for his house, giving warning of the trials that were to come, and partly as come, and of the defections, with great blessings on them that should faithfully stand out; indeed, *Balaam*-like, the most of them, and now, all of them in the enemies camp, are stating themselves as head of the rebels, and chief in the rebellion against these, who through the blessing of the Lord, took with the warning, and are to this day standing faithfully to their post; as also, his making the greatest of our enemies (even when our *Eliases* were taken away) on their death-beds, confirming to the remnant in being their own heralds, denouncing the righteous judgments of God against themselves and their posterity; and in all, vindicating the poor wrestling remnant, whom they in their health delighted to butcher, and breathing out their last, foretelling the glorious days that should be yet in *Scotland*, with the raising that buried-like cause again; as also, his righteous judgment, and holy justice, in taking the discipline of his own house out of the hands of the perfidious shepherds, who, at their best, in a terrible manner misemployed it. O what stately goings, doing more as to the discovery of jugglers, mockers, and hypocrites, than the wit of man could have done in a generation; and it is observable, that in a special way it reaches these who looked upon themselves, and would have others to do so, as above all reproofs and censures; so that if any poor thing out of a holy zeal and tenderness, had but ventured to reprove a minister, it was as lese-majesty, and no more peace for them. O then the righteousness of God! let us fall in love with it, and his infinite love in managing of that which was so grievously mismanaged; and in so wealing out our roads, that he that runs may read our sin in our judgment; for how has he stirred up one within ourselves, blasphemously cloathing himself with that supremacy, to drive out and punish (and he shall yet punish in another way than ever) for that horrid supremacy that did rage in our best times amongst professors, and especially ministers, and this day doth as fast cleave to them and the generation as ever. O glorious! O stately goings! who notwithstanding that he hides himself, yet abundantly shews that he is God and King of *Jacob*, though riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass,

as, yet king of Zion, and master of rejoicing to all the daughters thereof. O noble ground of rejoicing, when he gives out the order, and tunes the instrument for that effect, when it neither can nor will misgive. And O! unspeakable love and tenderness! in keeping up hitherto a remnant, witnessing and contending as nobly and valiantly this day as ever; having it to declare before the world, that they have hitherto lacked nothing: and no wonder, I cannot but think, that in a special way the credit of our Lord, so to speak, is engaged for that land, and for you, who have so eminently ventured soul and body in his hand.

Now, thus as to his preparing of me; next as to his leading of me.

When our worthy friend Mr. *Renwick* came last over, I was very inquisitive (being for a long time greatly weighted with that business) to know of two things from him. 1st, How it was betwixt him and the Lord, as to his state and interest. 2^{dly}, As to his inward encouragement and call from the Lord as to his undertaking in that great work of the ministry. To both which I had great satisfaction from him: as also, of his lively uptakings of the Lord's way with his church and people in this day, all which were engaging to me. After his parting with me, and going to *Groningen*, I was made to hear, as it were continually in my ears, *By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is very small?* Wherewith for a time I was greatly weighted, till it pleased the Lord, after the same manner, to give me the other word, as I thought an answer of the former; *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.* And by this the Lord, as it were, anew again, let me see his glorious and stately dealings, after the same manner as formerly, *viz.* his going by that which the world calls *great parts*, learning, policy, and worldly wisdom, and the idols of this generation; and not only so, but has had them, and to this day has them, all mustered against him; and O the noble foils they have gotten already, and that by the world's fools, from babes and sucklings trained up in Christ's school. While I lay again wonderfully led in, and wondering at these things, I received a line from our friend Mr. *Renwick*, with a short account of a notable piece of soul exercise he was in at that present, which was after this manner. " (To the praise of his free grace I must
 " speak

“ speak it) when he helps me either to pray or meditate,
 “ he is not wanting; but in other things I do not find
 “ him. However, I think this may be the cause of it,
 “ I cannot win to use and keep them in their own places :
 “ but there are some things good in themselves, and
 “ good when made a right use of; but to me they are as
 “ *Saul's* armour to *David*, I can put them on, but I can-
 “ not walk with them; and I cannot say but I could put
 “ them on, unless I should lie of the Lord, who, (bles-
 “ sed be his name) hath given me in some measure, a
 “ disposition.”

After the reading over of his letter, I found my heart greatly tyed to him, and was brought into a pleasant frame and calmness of spirit. But again, in two or three days, I was brought into great perplexities for the case of the church in general, and more especially for my mother-church; but I thought I found always my former solution sounding within me, and that with great power, yet not so as perfectly to calm me; till some days after Mr. *Renwick* wrote another letter to my sister concerning his soul's case, which I also, as the Lord helped me, returned my thoughts of. And the evening after, going out to walk, I was strongly overpowered with the impression that Mr. *Renwick* was presently to be ordained, and that I must lay out myself therein; and as I thought, wan to great certainty, that whatever difficulties should be in the way, they should be removed; for he himself should concern himself in it. While thus, I went to our worthy friend Mr. *Brackel*, and laid out the whole case to him; who no sooner heard of it, but was as one out of himself, with the great satisfaction and joy he had in it, which helped to my strengthening. Whereupon we resolved to write presently to Mr. *Renwick*, anent it, and that without the least thoughts or relation to the other two; and having but small time, we wrote but in short to him; which letter you may see from himself, as it came to his hands; he shewed it to the other two; who, on what grounds I know not, resolved to concern themselves alike in the affair as if the letter had been written to all of them. And after some days, Mr. *Renwick* sent us a very satisfying and refreshing letter, for our encouragement to move further in it; as also, the other two pretending the same clearness, wrote to me thereanent, which indeed was both surprizing and weighty to me, on many accounts; for the Lord, from my
 very

very first hearing of them named, led me in a quite contrary way as to them than to the other; and I think I am, not, and alas for it, disappointed by any of them, turn as they will.

Now, as to the difficulties I had to wrestle with, and our Lord's noble managing of his own cause, and poor worms concerned in it, it was thus; 1st, Our friend Mr. *Brackel*, had not only a great inclination, but told me, after the receiving of the letters, that he was fully determined, that they should all of them be ordained at *Embden*; which I durst not consent to; for the main man intended to have the management of it was *Cocceian* in his judgment, tho' he seemingly pretended otherwise, however I could not get him off that. A second reason, as I told him, of my being against it, was that since the Lord had moved *Groningen* to own us, and to shew kindness to us in our low estate, we could not pass by them, without first giving them the offer. However, nothing could prevail, and we were like to lose our friend in it; as also, others of my friends at *Leewarden*, who would not condescend to let me go from them. Yet I durst not yield, neither durst I stay, but as I had done formerly, ventured myself on my sweet, rich, and lovely, and O kind Lord's hand, who never failed me; yea, was ay better than his promise; when they saw I was coming away, Mr. *Brackel* promised to follow me within some days, and gave me a letter to one of the ministers, (which was all the recommendation I had from men) desiring me to deliver it to one of the ministers at *Groningen*, providing he was any thing acquainted by friends at *Groningen* of my design of coming there; and finding them all strangers to it, I resolved as to my recommendation, to cast myself on the Lord, and not to deliver my letter until Mr. *Brackel* came himself, thinking it might be a mean to engage him the more for us. When he came, I told him my resolutions as to *Embden* were the same as formerly, and that I was rather confirmed than altered, having got further notice from one of the professors in the place, that *Embden* was not so pure in some things, especially as to the magistrate's usurpation, as *Groningen*; and withal begging he might propose it to the ministers in *Groningen*, which he did; who told him, that it might be done well, and with great secrecy by the professors of the college, which satisfied our friend greatly; who alone laid down the whole way of it with them,

who,

who, after his acquainting me of it, departed out of the town, leaving me to manage what he had proposed and concluded.

But, before I go further, I shall give a short account of Mr. *Flint* and Mr. *Boyd*: So soon as I came to the town, I examined all of them severally, but really I could find no satisfaction in any of them, save in our friend Mr. *Flint*, I found him floating and unstable: as for Mr. *Boyd*, Mr. *Flint* informed me and the rest very sadly of him, both of his untenderness in his walk, and unacquaintedness in our case; that he was not only ignorant of much of it, but taken up, for the most part, with the arguments of the adversaries, a defending against his brethren: tho' indeed I did meet with no great disappointment, yet on many accounts it was trying, and many were our fears, as to acquainting him with our resolutions, in not letting him pass at the time. However, when we wan to be positive in it, and stated upon such noble grounds, as not daring to lay his house with such stones, &c. the Lord removed that difficulty wonderfully, and made Mr. *Boyd* not only seemingly willing to omit, but also, confirmed others as to their duty in what they had done. Now, I say, this being done, and our worthy friend Mr. *Brackel* out of town, I went to the chief professor, and conferring of our business with him, I found it could not be done without the concurrence of another brother-professor of his, who was a professed *Cocceian*; and using freedom with him, to tell him my scruples; he answered me, that the other was but to examine, and not lay on hands: I asked, if it could be done without him; who said, no: then I told him positively, that we could not admit of it in such a way; his being present, viz. a *Cocceian*, was essential to the ordination. So parting from them, with this resolution, to write to Mr. *Brackel* what was next to be done, and acquaint him with the case; so writing to him; he could see no hazard in that way: However, if I could not grant it, there was a necessity yet to resolve upon *Embden*: and there was a strange providence in his letter; for in the end of it, to make me come over my former scruple, he tells me, that he could assure me, unless I had a full testimony from all the professors of *Groningen* to the ministers of *Embden* for the students, they could not be owned there. This was a mean to clear me the more, that *Embden* was not the place that the Lord seemed to be
then

then calling us unto, since we could no more accept of the *Cocceian's* recommendation than ordination, as it was then circumstantiate. So that matters again seemed worse than ever, being likely to have both *Emden* and the whole professors, and others our friends, against us. But our Lord was then at hand, who had determined otherwise; that when I went again to Mr. *Johannes a Mark*, the honest professor, and to one of the ministers, and told them our case, and the weightiness of it, and that there was no other thing before our eyes in it, but the glory of God, and durst do no other way than what we had told. So begging they would lay it to heart, and take it upon them to prevail with the classis, that they would take it in hand, which, to the great admiration of some of us, they undertook most willingly. However the professor called for their testimonies, (for they were to have his also to the classis) and which was observable, all were missing save Mr. *Renwick's*, which was to the fore by a special providence, having got it in my hand but some few days before. When the professor did see it, he was willing to take it off our hand, but one of the ministers being then present, told it would never pass before the classis; so I told them, that it could not be expected, considering the tossed case of our church, that it could be in such a dress and order as otherwise were to be desired; and the professor owned me, and backed me in it. So that both said, since it was so, they thought my testimony, with Mr. *Brackel's*, to the classis, ay until another was procured, were sufficient; which I could not refuse, and it was of the Lord in a special way. However, there lay a trial to me in it, which was very great, viz. to have a special hand in Mr. *Flint's* passing, the testimony being laid so to my door; and considering how the Lord had led me, and I thought, by all dispensations, was even leading me by him; as also, from what I was discovering in him, it was to me a sore strait; for he, on the other hand, was pressing it violently. Whereupon, I went to him, and spake in private to him, ancient the business, with great tenderness, signifying the weightiness thereof; as also, how the Lord seemed every way to discountenance his passing; for, as to myself, I told him, I could give him no encouragement to it; but on the contrary, from the first time that I had seen him and Mr. *Boyd*, I was made to tremble at their coming o-

ver upon such a design. As also, that the letter that Mr. *Brackel* and I wrote to Mr. *Renwick* was no ways designed for him : and also of the missing of his testimonial. However, I told him, if he had the Lord's call to it, as he wrote to me, these might all be but as trials and spurs in his way. However I again begged him, as he loved his own soul, that he would not venture on such a weighty work rashly. Notwithstanding of all, he said he would go forward : So I, not without great heaviness of mind, was forced to countenance him ; and so going first to the professor for his testimony, I wrote next for our worthy Mr. *Brackel's*, which he presently, and most cheerfully sent me ; after these were had, and the day of the classis came, being delivered to them, they were sustained valid ; and after Mr. *Flint* had a little harangue before them, they were sent out a little, and the classis taking our cause into consideration, after, first one of the ministers rising up, and laying it openly out, and then another, all of them, with tears, cried out, It is the Lord's cause, and cost what it would, if all the kings of the earth were against it, they would go on in it. And, which is observable, one of them asking, How it came we passed by the professors, and took not ordination from them ? another of themselves rose up, and from that took occasion to lay out the government and discipline of our church ; and that it was inconsistent with our noble order to take such a course, and that we were much to be encouraged for it. Another that was a depute of the general synod, desired to be excused, for he feared he could not attend, it being at such a distance where he lived from the place ; the rest of his brethren, with tears in their eyes, stood up, and requested that no cost, pains nor charges might be looked unto in such a noble cause ; whereupon he confessed that it was so. It being also the custom of that place, that every one that passed must pay twenty *guilders* for the public use of the church ; the brethren jointly declared that they would be at all the charge themselves. O dear friends, praise him ! praise him ! who has been so mindful of us in our low estate. And after all this, calling them in again, they received them in a most friendly way, as never hitherto had been ; their injunctions our friend himself will show you. But what is also remarkable, that Mr. *Flint* in his harangue, gave an open testimony against all the forms and enormities in their church. O wonderful guiding and leading of the Lord !

Now, after all these wondrous ways of the Lord with us, it might have been expected that we should have been more knit to one another, more serious, tender, and zealous than ever. However, on the contrary, Mr. *Flint* strikes in with his old antagonist, he had informed so against, and states himself most bitterly against our friend Mr. *Renwick*, to the great grief of friends, and stumbling of strangers, who were witnesses to it. When it came to my ears, however heavy his carriage was to me, especially considering the circumstances, yet I thought it was not without the singular providence of God, who had permitted him to kythe and discover himself before he came a greater length: as also I thought I had now fair grounds to stop his going on any further in that so great a work; so I sent for our worthy friend G. K. (who has been greatly encouraging to me since he came over, and a great help to me) and for Mr. *Flint*, and in all tenderness to lay it to him what an extraordinary work he was about, and how extraordinary his call to the land was, and the way of his now designing to return; and that in all, I thought it required more than an ordinary case, frame and walk, of which I could see no evidences in him. While I was to go on in my discourse, he interrupted me, falling out in great bitterness, declaring he would no more meddle in it; and that he was positive, that upon no account he would go on in the work, nor go home with our friend Mr. *Renwick*; giving these for his three unreasonable reasons; 1. He said, he was sure he would never agree with him. 2. Because he said, He (*viz.* Mr. *Renwick*) did read too little. 3. Because of his spirit of supremacy he shewed in *Scotland*. I asked him, why he could not agree with him? He could give no reason. As to the second, I asked him, if he did not read, I desired to know how he spent his time? If in prayer, or meditating, or any other way? He answered, he durst not but think he was much in that exercise. To which I answered, these were the studies in this day most accomplishing for every work, and especially the work in hand. And for his last, he could also give no ground for it. After I had got this from his own mouth, I thought we were fairly loosed from doing any more with him, and then we sent for Mr. *Renwick*, who came; and we gave him before Mr. *Flint*, a relation of what had passed; who would have passed from some things that he asserted,

yet

yet adhering to his non-passing at that time, but to stay a longer time, and another occasion: so having prayed, I again begged him to lay things to heart; how the Lord was provoked; and pressed, that whether he staid or went, they might be as one heart. However, when he went home, he signified to all, his resolutions to stay, and bought books at a strange rate, and set himself to learn the *Dutch*, and went without advertising any of us, to the *Dutch* Kirk on the Lord's day, and was present at all their forms without the least resentment; all sad tokens. And as before he had joined hand in hand with Mr. *Boyd* against Mr. *Renwick*, now again his passion turned into its old channel against Mr. *Boyd*, which is wrath-like.

Now, dear Brethren, I stand astonished, and wonder how we are now again put to it; for he had received the professor's testimony, with Mr. *Brackel's*; as also his being before, and haranguing before the classis: so that it threatened no less than a sad blow to all the beginnings and after expectations in that place; as also to the cause and whole remnant at home; as also to put a stop to our friend's passing. This cost sore fighting and wrestling, though indeed Mr. *Flint* and Mr. *Boyd* were no more concerned in it than no such thing had been; but on the contrary, evidenced tokens of their satisfaction withal; as also, in their expecting a stop as to our friend's passing. At last I wrote to Mr. *Brackel*, advertising him that we thought Mr. *Flint* could not pass: and with his answer I was yet more discouraged than ever, pressing me by all arguments, that he should pass; and if he did not, how prejudicial it would be to the cause, and such like. Now, (which made our case heavier) we durst not vent ourselves so freely to strangers as we would, fearing the consequences that might follow. However, travelling in these difficulties until time would suffer no more delay, the time of ordination being at hand, we resolved to go to the preses of the classis, and give them notice that M. *Flint* could not pass. When he first heard of it, he was greatly discouraged, and had this word which was observable; "Sir, he said, if ye had told me of it but a day sooner, I could have stopped it, and gotten a delay until Mr. *Flint* was ready, and fully recovered." (for he himself pretended a distemper of body) I told him, I hoped, he would let it be no hinderance to our friend's passing: He objected again,

If that Mr. *Flint* was but able to sit on a chair before the classis, it would be sufficient, and he might stay after in the land until he were recovered. At last, I did let somewhat fall of his other distempers that we feared were raging in him; which, when he perceived, he seemed presently satisfied, and undertook most Christianly the management of the business, and that Mr. *Renwick* should be ordained. O wonderful love and condescendency! and noble Governor, who can ply, and doth ply the hearts of all as he will! Then I went to another of the ministers, who had all along been a great agent in the business, and told him Mr. *Flint* was resolved not to pass. He enquired a reason; I told him, he pretended his sickness; he told me, that could be none, for he and all the ministers and professors of the town saw him daily on the streets, and but one day before in the public college. (Now the ordination was to be the next day) Seeing it was so, I told him the whole account of him, which when he heard, he was so far from being offended, that he adhered to all, and approved of our tenderness; yet he said, it would greatly reflect upon us, our cause, and the whole remnant at home; and pressed, that if it were possible, he might offer himself to the ordination, and then we needed not let him go home until we found him accomplished. This again began to work new stirs upon us; yet after some time laying it before the Lord, he was pleased to let us see that it was but a temptation, and that upon no account were we to offer him a sacrifice of that we could not take to ourselves. After this, all our fears and scruples were removed, and we fully determined to lay it all on the Lord, and the management of events and consequents on himself. So immediately going to Mr. *Flint*, I desired to know his mind; which, he said, was the same, not to pass, or go home. After some speaking to him, I desired he might go to the preses himself, and make his own excuse, but not to pretend that which was not, *viz.* his sickness; which he did, and the preses accepted of it well. O my dear friends, who is to mean, that has such a God for their God! so condescending, so loving, so mighty, and so powerful, that he can do in heaven and earth what he will. There is yet one remarkable trial, and honourable outgate that we had, *viz.* before the ordination; the minister had told me that it was impossible, and could not pass, without subscribing three things;

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the one was, their catechisms; the other two our friend will give you an account of: I desired to see their confession, and we find that there is in it mention of the forms, and enormities of their church, which we plainly told them we disowned, and were engaged in our solemn vows to the contrary. This was again like to stop all. However, I went to others of them, and gave them an account of our Confession and Catechisms, and that we could subscribe none but these, which, at last, they condescended unto; a practice never before heard of in these lands. O praise and wonder! and wonder and praise! for his yet minding us in our low estate, and concerning himself in us before strangers. I also desired of them to have liberty, with our friend *G. H.* and my brother *Mr. Gordon*, to have access, to be witnesses to the on-laying of the hands of the classis, or presbytery, which likewise they granted, though not used in that place.

Now the day of the ordination being come, *Mr. Renwick*, with my brother *Mr. Gordon*, and *G. H.* came in to my chamber, but none of the rest; after prayer we went out to the church, where the classis was to hold; and walking together in an outer-room there, as we had been desired, until our friend was called in, which they did in a most honourable way, not only by the ordinary servant, but by one of the brethren ministers. After he was in, we returned, and spending some time together in prayer, we again returned, and about two in the afternoon, (the examination lasting from ten to two) one of the oldest of the ministers was sent out (as they had promised) to call us in, to be witnesses to the on-laying of the hands: when we came in, the whole of the ministers saluted us most kindly, affectionately, and friendly; after some exhortations, they proposed to him the the subscription, which they jointly declared to be nothing else than the subscribing of our own confession. After their reading it over again and again, *Mr. James* started a scruple in it, which, through the Lord's blessing, was both seasonable, and made acceptable to all, and then he subscribed it. Then with prayer they went about the laying on of the hands, in a most solemn, and a most tender way; and the whole time our friend was upon his knees, the most of the whole meeting were joining with the tears in their eyes. After, he was desired by the preses to take the brethren by the hand, which they all gave him in a most affectionate way; and
after

after he had done, he (our friend I mean) had a most serious, grave and taking discourse to the whole classis, and so was dismissed. When going out of the room, the preses called me, and desired that Mr. *Renwick* and I might dine with the classis; which we promised; and coming in amongst them, they were as brethren at a frait, every one of them how to express their kindness to us. The preses desired me to sit on his right hand at the head of the table; and after a little sitting, he declared to me the great satisfaction the whole brethren had had in Mr. *Renwick*, that they thought, the whole time he was before them he was so filled with the Spirit, that his face did shine; and that he never had seen such evident tokens of the Lord's being with them, as in this affair all alongst, and so blessed and praised the Lord for what he had seen. Then he desired a relation might be given to the brethren of our cause; which I did, both of our sufferings and wrestlings; who were all so affected, that ye would have thought, they were both weeping and rejoicing; grieving for our case, as they said; and rejoicing that the Lord had honoured us in such a noble piece of service; promising to mind us both in public and private; and also offered themselves anew again for the same service, whatever might be the hazard. Then the preses told them, that the magistrate was usurping as much upon them, and there was as great yielding amongst them as in our land; and if they followed not our practice, the church would be ruined, and they and their posterity rooted out. There was also another minister who declared, he had been twenty years a minister in that place, but had never seen nor found so much of the Lord's Spirit, accompanying a work, as that; and declared, he would die and live with us. O tune up your harps, and sing praises unto him, whose mercy endureth for ever, and has had yet compassion upon us in our low estate.

Now, my honourable Brethren, here ye have a short account, yet not the hundred fold of what the Lord hath done for us in this affair; the bearer, with our dear and honoured friend in the Lord, will give you a fuller account of matters than I was able in the time to do, *viz.* *G. H.* But now, when we thought the battle was fought and the storm over, it begun afresh again upon us from another airth, representing itself as terrible as any of the former

former; though, blessed be his name, through his rich blessing, we were never once suffered to be cast down at the thoughts of it! and O again admire and wonder! The morning after the ordination, as I was lying in my bed, I received a letter from Mr. *Brackel*, wherein he gives me an account of a letter from *Holland* to stop the ordination, for he was to receive a libel against us all, subscribed by the church of *Rotterdam*, Mr. *Br. Mr. Hog* younger, and Mr. *Thomas Langlands*, accusing us of many terrible things, and sent me three or four of the prime of them, which I have sent with our friend; and withal desiring me, so soon as it came to my hands, to show his letters to me to the classis, and either to vindicate ourselves before them, or otherways to stop Mr. *Rentwick* and Mr. *Flint's* ordination; (for then he had not known Mr. *Flint's* determination and ours) and upon that pretence of Mr. *Flint's* sickness, the letter was sent by an express to me for its greater haste, and might have come three days sooner to my hand than it did, but the Lord in a wonderful way stopped it, but what way we could never yet learn. O wonderful Counsellor! for if it had but come a day sooner, by all probability it had stopped our friend's passing, for there had been a necessity for my shewing it to the classis; and they could have done no other at least, than to have taken it to consideration, and to have delayed the diet for that time; but O his wisdom! infinite wisdom and power! After I got it, I went to the professors, and ministers, and others of the godly, and gave them a full account of all, and of all my letters, who were nothing troubled, but justified us all in our dealings against these ministers, and and promised to own us in all, and give us an account of any informations that should come against us; for Mr. *Brackel's* letters told us, they were presently to write to *Groningen* against us, and cause print their accusations against us. So the Lord was still gracious unto us, in keeping us in continual exercise, that our dependance might be the more on himself: for when he had wrought for us and broken the snare, we were made to fear Mr. *Brackel* and friends in *Friesland*; for in his letters, they had promised to have their libel ready against us at *Amsterdam*, against such a day as they named; and Mr. *Brackel*, without acquainting any but one or two, casts himself to be at *Amsterdam* the same day, but when he came, the libel was not ready, but they would have been

at telling it by word of mouth to him, but he refused to hear them unless in writing; and indeed he was wonderfully helped to own the Lord's cause, and poor *Scotland's* cause. When he left them, they promised to have the information and libel against us at him within four or five days: But now the time is long over, and there is no word of it! And so he returned to us all, to the wonder of all, and the joy of many, more our friend, and *Scotland's* friend than ever. And he told me a strange passage, That the day before he went to their meeting, he was walking in his own yard, and there he saw a little small bird hotly pursued by a great hawk, and after many tossings and turnings, the bird at last, flies to him for shelter, and he relieved it, which was borne in upon him at the time, as a lively emblem of ours and the church's case. O praise to him! when we had win to good hopes of that storm's being broken, we must yet again enter into another, threatening as terrible as the other. That same day, in the evening, that I received Mr. *Brackel's* letter with the apostate ministers libel, arrive *James Russel*, *Patrick Grant* and *David Robertson*, with full assurance to stop the ordination; but through the Lord's goodness, they came also a day too late, and were disappointed, I think, every way; as to that affair I refer you wholly to the bearer. They are still staying here, I fear their design be not good; and I think, in that place they shall have none of our two, Mr. *Flint* and Mr. *Boyd*, much against them. O Lord, give wisdom, and come yet and be seen. O honourable friends, hath he not been gloriously seen in this business!——

Now, what can I say unto you, our engagements are great, let our thankfulness be answerable; get you the gospel, O the precious gospel again amongst you; hold it up by prayer amongst you; be more in tenderness, humility, watchfulness, crying, and wrestling than ever; for he is a holy and jealous God. O be much for him, downright and upright for him, cost what it will; he is more than able to bear your charges, on whose shoulders the government is laid. And my poor advice would be, That with all haste you would write to *London*, discharging Mr. *Nisbet* to come here, for his base sitting of time, and such special calls. As also to send for the two that are here; for now we are keeping fire in our own bosoms, and, if the Lord prevent it not, putting weapons in madmen's hands. As also, to seek the Lord's mind in ordaining
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of more ministers, and that among yourselves. My own judgment has been, that providing you can find such qualified with holiness, tenderness, examples, as *Paul* says of the believers, in word, in conversation, in spirit, in faith and purity; and such as *Acts* i. 21. which accompanied you in your tribulations, and have been witnesses to your contendings and wrestlings, and given proof of their constancy and faithfulness. And indeed that is the way, I think that would bring in most glory to our Lord, and which would be much like our case, and my soul would most ply with every way; for I am far from the mind that the Lord will make use of learning for the building of his house again. It is, and has been so much boasted of amongst us, so trusted to, and improved against our Lord, that, I think, for a time, he will put a mark of ignominy upon it, and train up at his own school. O my brethren, it is *Scotland* that must make fit for ministers, else here it will never be. —

I think ye should send over three of the most eminent among you, with the first occasion, in room of these ye are to call home, that our cause may be kept up in that college, and some to witness against *James Russel*, and the others, who have seated there, or any that may oppose us. As also, letters of thanks should be written to that college, and to the classis; as also, an approbation of what they have done. As also, a joint declaration against the church of *Rotterdam*, first, for their setting down to the Lord's table a promiscuous multitude, men of blood, that have been at *Pentland* and *Bothwell* against the Lord; men banded, cessed, and what not; as also, debarring from it such as were faithful, as worthy *Rathillet*, &c. Item, for receiving in amongst them *Mr. Fleming*, who is rather *Charles Stuart's* minister than *Christ's*. As also, their cruel dealing and handling of their countrymen that came there, who are faithful in their day, threatening to starve them out of their consciences, notwithstanding of the large supply, they have from the magistrates of that place, for the effect of the poor. Item, Their taking into their sessions, as members thereof, men void of both principles and tenderness, and their not exercising the discipline of our church, nor preaching faithfully against the sins of our time. As also, their licensing all to preach amongst them, however notour for their open defection, and avowed rebellion against *Christ*; such as have devoured the flock at home,

and seek to pursue those in a strange land who have escaped out of their claws. As also, their open and practically discovering themselves this day against our mother-church, &c.

My advice would be also, that your testimony would relate of a declaration, that you would set out also, laying out the rebellion all alongst it, and how they have now forsaken Christ and the poor remnant; so that if ye had the occasion, ye durst not further own them; and lay it out to the churches, that providing any of them come by them, that they or none others be owned without they have a testimony and approbation from the suffering remnant of the church of Scotland. As also, letters of thanks would be sent to Mr. *Brackel*, for his kindness and faithfulness in the cause of God, and to the sufferers here.

I can say no more, my dear and honourable brethren, but what I omit, I hope the bearers will supply it.— Let me hear more frequently from you all, for your letters are very refreshing to me; though many times I be but little in case to write unto you, yet I desire that you may find my practical kindness, and not mistake my silence.

Now, The blessing of Him that dwelt in the bush, be with you all.

*Your sympathizing Brother,
and real Servant,*

ROBT. HAMILTON.

BUT to return: It was resolved by the meeting that William Nairn should be sent abroad to Mr. Hamilton with copies of the public papers; and also to desire him to draw up a protestation against the Scots congregation in Rotterdam; and to send it here, that it might be considered by the next meeting. Accordingly William Nairn went abroad and took with him all the foresaid public papers which were copies of those that were seized when *Earl'soun* was apprehended.

That which occasioned the meeting to mention the protestation against the Scots congregation at Rotterdam, was the foresaid letter (read to them that day) from Mr. Hamilton.—Upon which it was thought requisite that he who was so acquaint with these things which were to be protested against in that congregation, that none could be so fit as he to draw up the said protestation

testation.—Yet never any such paper came from him to the societies; and that protestation which was afterwards drawn up and published, was written at home, and sent abroad to Mr. Hamilton, who put it in print.

It was likewise resolved, That a letter should be wrote to those two young men, Mr. John Flint, and Mr. William Boyd, then at the university of *Groningen*, expressly calling them home, upon the account of some information received against them by the foresaid letter, and the bearer G—— Hill. But though it was delivered to them by Mr. Nairn, yet Mr. Flint did not regard it, but not long after joined with James Ruffel; neither did Mr. Boyd return till the next year.

It was further resolved, That a letter of thanks should be written to the Classis of Groningen, another to Embden, and a third to Mr. William Brackel; as also, a letter to *Earlstoun*, and another to his Lady. All which, were to be drawn up by Robert Goodwin, Thomas Lining, William Nairn and Michael Shields, and other friends at Glasgow.

That which gave occasion to resolve upon writing these letters, as these to Groningen, Embden, and Mr. Brackel, was the foresaid letter of Mr. Hamilton's (which being read at this meeting, was very encouraging and reviving to them) giving a large account of the ordination of Mr. James Renwick by the Classis of Groningen, and of the stops and hinderances of it, with the way of outgate from them: In which he signified his desire that letters of thanks should be written to the said Classis, and also to the College to whom the societies were so very much obliged; and likewise to the ministers of Embden, who had offered to ordain the three students, and had otherwise given proof of their sympathy with the societies; and in like manner to Mr. Brackel, who had several ways laid out himself for their encouragement, particularly in the ordination of Mr. Renwick.

Accordingly the letter to Mr. Brackel was written and sent to him with William Nairn, as also the letter to the lady *Earlstoun*, (at the time in *Lewarden*) the occasion of which, and of the letter to her husband, then prisoner, was letters from them both to the meeting, who thereupon thought it their duty to write again to them, for their encouragement under their present lot, and to shew their sympathy with them. But as for the letters to Groningen and Embden, so far as I know they

were not wrote at this time, but afterward, as shall be shewn in its place.

It was in like manner appointed by the meeting, that Robert Goodwin, James Wilton, Thomas Lining, R—— S——, A—— R——, and Michael Shields should meet together for looking over and revising the resolutions of all our general meetings, in order to see if the same were right and sound, and if found so, to put them in a better form and dress: And when thus drawn up, the societies in every shire to have a copy of the same. This resolution (so far as I remember) was never put in practice, the troubles of that time being so many.

Finally, it was resolved by the meeting, that the 5th of *September* should be observed by our societies, a day of fasting and prayer; and the next meeting to be at *Darmede*, upon the 3d of *October*, which day was desired to be kept in prayer, by these in our societies remaining at home.

HAVING given a short account of what was done at this meeting, it will not be amiss to subjoin the letter agreed upon by them to be written to Mr. William Brackel. But first it is requisite to shew what gave the occasion to write an answer therein to some things where-with the societies were charged. When Mr. Renwick was to be ordained by the Classis of Groningen, some Scotch ministers then at Rotterdam *, went to *Mr. Kooleman*, a Dutch minister, desiring him to write to Mr. Brackel, to stop the ordination of Mr. Renwick, which *Mr. Kooleman* did, writing some accusations which these ministers and others had against the societies. Upon which Mr. Brackel wrote to Mr. Hamilton, giving him an account of the same. But before this information came, Mr. Renwick was ordained; and if it had come but one day sooner, by all appearance, the ordination had been stopt for a while, until they had cleared themselves and their friends at home.

As at that time, it was very unpleasant that any of the godly should have had such mistakes and misapprehensions one of another, and so contended with one another; so now, it is not desireable to mention these conten-

* Particularly Mr. George Barclay, Mr. Robert Langlands, and Mr. Thomas Hog younger, whose names are not correctly printed in Mr. Hamilton's letter.

tendings: Nevertheless, to make this affair more clear and plain, the relating these accusations wherewith the Societies were charged by the foresaid ministers at Rotterdam cannot be well evited. Wherefore I shall first insert the same, as they were set down in a letter by Mr. Brackel to Mr. Hamilton, which he sent to this land, and the same was read to this meeting; and next I shall give a copy of the letter to Mr. Brackel; wherein is a short answer to these accusations, which was thought fit to be sent to him, (in regard these accusations were sent to him) that thereby they might endeavour to vindicate themselves of these things that they were falsely charged with,

The Accusations against the SOCIETIES.

First, That they had not only cast off the King, and all magistrates then ruling in Scotland; but moreover, had constitute among themselves all kind of magistrates, a chancellor, and presidents over all great men, &c. and orders or lords for a public politic convention, usurping an imagined power over the commands of those that are in authority, yea saying that all are to be cut off as open enemies who do not acknowledge that government.

Secondly, That the Societies were not pure in religion, which they said was manifest by questions proponed to all who are admitted into their fellowship.

Thirdly, That the Societies were only a faction, and not a church, and that they had no power of calling pastors, or of giving ecclesiastic testimonies; and that the silent men said they were the most pure church, and that they had pastors, presbyteries and synods; and that it was their part to examine students, and to confirm them in the ministry with the imposition of hands; and that it was not lawful for any *Hollandish* Presbytery to pluck that right out of their hands.

Fourthly, That these students that were at Groningen, were not of an unblameable life, especially John Nisbet, who endeavoured to kill one, for the reason in the first accusation,

Here follows the Letter to MR. BRACKEL.

Reverend and worthy Sir,

WE desire to bless the Lord on your behalf, that he hath made choice of you to be an instrument

ment to appear for your Master's wronged cause in this persecuted church, which, through the good hand of God, has proven an effectual mean for raising up of Christ's fallen banner in this backflidden land, wherein there are none to appear valiantly for him, according to the command of God, and our solemn vows and engagements ; but upon the other hand, are homologating with the enemy, and are turned violent reproachers and persecutors of the poor afflicted suffering remnant both of such as are living, and also those who are dead, to the humbling, weakning, and turning back of many who were beginning to look after the Lord, and had put their hand to the plough, in witnessing and testifying against the abominations of our day and time ; which doth clearly appear from these their most odious, ridiculous calumnies, which the letter sent to us by our faithful delegates, is a new certification of.

Sir, we shall, as in the sight of an holy God, declare the truth in every point of these accusations ye received from these ministers at Rotterdam against us.

As for our casting off, and rejecting of *Charles Stuart*, and all whom they call magistrates ruling under him, we own it, and desire to mourn for our being so long in doing of it : The reasons of our doing thereof, we hope ye are sufficiently informed of by our worthy and faithful delegates sent to you. But,

2dly, As to setting up of magistrates among ourselves, there is no truth in it. And as to that of killing all who will not adhere to us and are not of our opinion, we declare it to be false and calumnious, and a thing detested by us.

As to the second accusation, " That we are not pure in religion." Alas ! we are not as we ought to be in that : But as to the putting any questions to those whom we admit to fellowship, we declare we put none but such as we have from divine precept, and former engagements to God and one another.

As for the third accusation, we think it not strange that they calumniate us as a faction, and not a church ; for those ministers and people whom they hold to be the church, did reproach our most noble suffering ministers, and martyrs, as erroneous, and of Jesuitical principles ; as witness Mr. Kid and Mr. King, Mr. Cameron and Mr. Cargill, who in our declining age, were the only witnesses, as ministers, for the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Christ, against all the encroachments made upon the privileges of his church.

As to the second part of the third accusation, "That the silent ministers say they are the most pure church, and that they have pastors and presbyteries:" It is true they sit in presbyteries and condemn the innocent, by justifying the lawfulness of taking the bond and late indulgency; upon which head, among many others, our worthies have suffered, testifying against the same; and several of them hear the tested Curates themselves, and advise others to do so; and the generality of them refuse either to preach or administer the sacraments; as witness, when some have come to them with a testificate for the benefit of baptism, they refuse, and advise them to go to the tested Curates. This is a part of the purity of their church.

As to the fourth accusation, "That the students are not of an unblameable life." In answer to that, those three who were sent to you, in order to be educated for the ministry, as to their life and conversation while they were with us, they walked blamelessly so far as could be discerned by us.

Worthy Sir, to conclude, not desiring to be tedious; we the poor suffering remnant of the church of Scotland give you hearty thanks for your faithful pains and diligence anent the ordination of Mr. James Renwick; and are glad, and rejoice to hear that you and your worthy brethren had satisfaction in him, and we take it as a token for good, that the Lord will visit and gather together again his poor scattered sheep in our land; and also, that our God and your God, shall recompence your labour of love, pains and diligence, seven-fold into your bosom. Which is the prayer of your, &c.

THE enemies being much encouraged and emboldened by the discovery of the design (mentioned above) which was carrying on against them, advanced in prosecuting their wicked ends, and went on in their cruel persecution against all whom they knew or could hear of, that did not comply with their sinful impositions; and the Societies did not want their large share in these sad afflictions and calamities. In the interval betwixt the last and this meeting, Mr. James Renwick came to this land; which was very reviving and refreshing to the Societies, under all the sad things they were exercised with.

with. Though he was ordained *May 10th*, and though his desire to be in this land was great; yet he came not to it until *September* thereafter, being hindered by several troubles and difficulties that he met with.

THE General Meeting according to appointment met at *Darremede*, upon the third day of *October*, 1683. After prayer, Mr. James Renwick being come there, gave an account of his ordination, and shewed his testificate of the same, subscribed by several ministers, to the meeting; by whom he was called and received as their minister, which he accepted and embraced. Also, Mr. Renwick read to the meeting, a paper which was called his *Testimony* * : wherein was contained his mind and judgment concerning the controversies of the time, both concerning duty and sin; adhering to several duties which were then controverted and opposed, and witnessing against several things which he looked upon to be corruptions and defections, even in many ministers, naming some of them, and mentioning what he testified against in them.

At some things in this paper, especially that which was in it concerning some ministers who were particularly named, some persons were displeased and offended at the time, and afterwards it was much misrepresented, and he reproached upon that account †.

The same day there was a paper read to the meeting concerning the oath of secrecy, which had been several ways abused, and was then no-ways needful: Therefore they concluded to lay it aside, and agreed upon the said paper, the tenor whereof follows:

“ Although an engagement in these things that are absolutely and abstractedly duty, cannot nor ought not to be rescinded and annulled, because of the objective tie before the engagement, which was only a superadded obligation; yet these things that are not duty simply or absolutely, but in respect of some circumstances of the case, and when engaged unto from special inducements, we say, these inducements failing, or the thing itself becoming burdensome, that same power which laid on the engagement may take it off again, imposing it no further.—So we having entered into an oath of secrecy from
some

* This testimony is now printed with his Sermons.

† See Renwick's 25th Letter, P. 64 of the printed volume.

some special inducements, particularly and principally the carrying on of Lanerk declaration, that it should not be discovered and the action hindered, and therefore in that respect the engagement was requisite ; yet we bringing it and applying it all alongst, though the nature of it was only concerning the things treated upon at that time ; and also, seeing how it hath been sadly abused ; upon the one hand, some thereby binding up themselves from duty, which was far contrary both to the nature of the thing, and also to the intention of the imposers ; and upon the other hand, by some really involving themselves in the guilt of perjury by their inconsiderate laxness in it.—Therefore we (the same power that laid it on) do require that engagement no further to be imposed, not suffering that yoke to lie any longer upon people's necks ; yet we hope that none, as they tender the glory of God and the good of his cause, will take occasion hereat to be more lax than was their duty formerly. This we do, really professing our sincere desire to be humbled before the Lord for every way of our abusing that (now laid aside) *oath of secrecy* †.

The meeting also agreed upon a Letter to be sent to friends in Dublin in Ireland ; a true copy whereof follows :

October 3d, 1683.

Dear Friends and covenanted Brethren,

THE Lord brought us to a high pitch of a glorious and blessed reformation, in the several steps thereof, from Popery, Prelacy, and Erastian supremacy ; and took us into covenant with himself, to serve him after the due order, and to maintain his interest with our lives and liberties, as we should answer to him at the great day. Whereby our land was made the glory of the nations, and our church terrible to her enemies, *as an army with banners, holiness to the Lord* being the badge ; so that we may say, *our vine which the Lord brought out of Egypt*

O

† Mr. Hamilton, in a letter he sent home to the Societies, shews the unwarrantableness of this oath ; for this reason (amongst others) because it allowed private persons to require and impose an oath : For which cause he refused it when it was tendered unto him.

Egypt, did fill the land, and the hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. But alas! there are crept in amongst us little foxes to spoil the tender grapes; malignant men disaffected to the cause and people of God, who got footing in judicatories and armies, who ought to have been purged out, that their places might be filled up with men of known integrity, according to the word of God, *Exod. xviii. 21. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.* Yet that duty was not only hindered and condemned by a prevailing company of carnal hearts; but also, public resolutions were fallen upon to bring in known malignants, enemies to God and godliness, into places of power and trust: and commissioners authorized to close a treaty with this man *Charles Stuart*, king of malignants, and to give him the crown, upon his subscribing such demands as were sent to him, after so many discoveries of his malice against God, and of his still persisting in the same, and notwithstanding they knew him not to be hearty, but juggling in what he condescended to; who no sooner got footing, but used all means to ruin the work of God; and in their first parliament took, as it were, the royal diadem off King Christ's head, (O horrid blasphemy!) and set it upon their king, whereby they made him an idol in his person; who, by virtue of that sacrilegious robbing of the Son God, commanded our ministers to leave their flocks, over which the principal and good Shepherd had set them, which they almost all did, as if they had been hirelings, and suffered the wolf to catch and scatter the sheep; so that we may say, Our pleasant things were not taken from us, but we give them away with our own hands. We betrayed the interest of Christ, and gave enemies all their asking, and made the Lord's pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. Yet the Lord, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place, stirred up some to go to the high places of the fields, and jeopard their lives unto the death, in proclaiming the truths of God; whereby there were great inroads made upon Satan's territories, who finding himself at a loss and disadvantage, spewed out sinful snares amongst us, to ruin the work of God, and to break us, *viz.* indulgences and indemnities, whereby Christ's crown was established upon a man's head, which some men, loving worldly ease more than truth, embracing, they betrayed the cause of God, and yielded the day to the dragon and his angels;

angels; others who had not the offer, yet gaping after it, struck in with them, to strengthen the devil's side; and many who professed to be against such courses themselves, yet tendered more the credit of discreditable men than the honour of God; and instead of using means for their reclaiming, strengthened their hands in their perverse ways, and sided with them against those whom the Lord raised up to be faithful and free, and (weakly, though not designedly I hope, for we desire to be charitable to them) wrought together to gain the end of the common adversary; who, as they gained ground, increased the persecution; which now hath discovered the thoughts and hidden hypocrisy of many hearts. Yet in all this, (blessed be the holy and wise Lord) he had still a remnant who kept their ground, and through his assistance, wrestled for him, by faithful preaching of his will, appearances, testimonies, declarations, and sufferings; so that there is not one step of all our public defection, but that he hath honoured and helped a party to witness against, and to seal their testimonies with their blood, both ministers and people of divers qualities.

And now, we desire nothing but, the Lord assisting, to follow the good old way, and to stand upon the ground whereunto the Lord, by our worthy reformers, brought us, and for which we have been wrestling and contending: we say, we are seeking nothing but to take the Lord's part against his enemies, to stand under *Michael's* banner to fight against the dragon, and to have our banished King Christ brought back again; and in order to this, studying to shake our hands clean of the causes of his displeasure at us, which keeps him so long away, and to set about the duties of Christianity with mourning, humiliation, fasting and prayer.

Therefore, being all engaged in one common cause, and bound in covenant together, and having some knowledge of your case, and also of your desire to know and follow duty; we thought it expedient to write unto you, ye having been, to the grief of our souls, led aside by the cruel, and subtle dealing of adversaries, and the treachery and unfaithfulness of these who gave themselves out for your leaders; desiring, as brethren, that ye would lay to heart the sad case our church is redacted unto by reason of our sin against the Lord; and consider what is called for at your hands, if either you desire to

see his return again to *Britain and Ireland*, or to transmit his truths to the succeeding generation, as to the shaking yourselves clean of the abominations of the times and also withdrawing yourselves from these backslidden ministers altogether unfaithful to our wronged Lord and Master: for as to your meeting-houses, not knowing what underhand dealing hath been with the wicked powers of the time, neither thinking the case to be formally the same with our hell-hatched indulgences in *Scotland*: yet the effects are much one. For,

1. The embracing of these meeting-houses was a dividing of themselves from their more righteous brethren and their sufferings, exposing them to be the only butt of the adversaries malice, and to shift for themselves contrary to our engagements, whereby we were to take one common lot with the common cause.

2. It was an embracing of a snare, whereby they were were drawn into, not only a supine and loathsome formality and neutrality in the Lord's cause, but into unfaithfulness in the highest degree, palliating the sins, and covering the abominations of the tyrannical powers, lest they, having the arm of flesh upon their side, should cast down their meeting-houses, and cast out themselves; and in no measure discovering the duty of the day to people; so that they are ignorant of what these cruel adversaries have done against our blessed Lord, and of their own sin in strengthening their hands in their working wickedness, and upholding that fabric of rebellion against the heavens. Oh! what shall we say, sin and duty hath been both hid, and the souls of the people not cared for, neither the standing of the interest of Jesus Christ which they have palpably betrayed; and have most actively given their consent to the enemies taking and keeping the houses of God in possession. And

3. They have quitted their meeting-houses at the command and threatning of men; for albeit their entry was hurtful to the cause, and the exercise of their ministry nothing but a selling of truth, and a buying of sinful liberty to themselves; yet that does not warrant another step of declining duty, in explicitly and more fully delivering up the privileges of Jesus Christ; yea, one pendule of his crown should not be yielded, though it should cost us all our lives, and we cry out, *Let it not be heard in Gath, nor published in the streets of Askelon*, that the Covenanters in *Britain and Ireland* should be standing
with

with their heads upon their necks in that day when King Christ's crown was taken from him.

O beloved Friends and Covenanted Brethren, go on in your duty, and follow no men, but them who will follow the Lord Jesus Christ; consider truth as naked, abstracting from all persons, and resolve firmly in Jehovah's strength to stand to it alone, albeit none should stand with you; and never take carnal reasons and arguments to plead yourselves out of your duty, but consider ay the case, whether it be duty or not, in all its circumstances; and if found to be so, then up and do it upon the greatest of hazards; and think not to walk so as the abused laws of man shall not reach you, for if they do not, the law of God will; for they are now confronted one against another, and the cry is gone forth from the Lord to all that will side themselves with him, to take his part against a cruel and treacherous generation. *Say not a confederacy unto them, neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. But sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread; and he shall be a sanctuary unto you, Isa. viii. 12, 13, 14. Wherefore come out from them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. O come out from among them, that ye be not partakers of their sins, and that ye receive not of their plagues; for their sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered their iniquities, Rev. xviii. 4, 5. O make haste, and get in under the shadow of the Lord's wings, and give up with every false and wicked way, that now ye may be hid from the fiery indignation; for he is coming to shake terribly the earth, and to punish the inhabitants thereof for their iniquities. There is a sword bathed in heaven to come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of his curse: and spare whom he will, he will not spare ministers, yea Presbyterian ministers, for they have betrayed the interest of Jesus Christ; yea, not only consented unto, but concurred with enemies spoiling him of his princely robes, and of the power he hath in his own house: They have made sad the hearts of the righteous, whom the Lord hath not made sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life, and have seduced the people, by seeing visions*

of peace for them in their backsliding courses, when there was no peace from the Lord.

O dearly beloved in our blessed Lord, follow none further than they follow Christ; and cease to hear the instruction which causeth to err from the words of knowledge; and *mark and avoid them who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

We shall trouble you no further at the time, but heartily and fully approving of the carriage of your hearty friend and well-wisher in the Lord, Mr. *James Renwick*, among you, (who is for us a faithful minister of Jesus Christ) in not joining with these men-ministers with you, and in declining them as to the seeking and accepting their call to preach, or giving them satisfaction as to his ordination; yet, as often he said unto yourselves, we hold ourselves obliged in duty to satisfy you who have been his hearers; therefore we have sent unto you a true transcript of the testificate of his ordination in *Latin*, and the *English* version thereof, with some other papers for your clearing and information in the Lord's cause; thanking you heartily for the great kindness, he reports, that ye shewed unto him, taking it as if it had been done to all of us. And desiring that ye, shaking yourselves clean of the abominations of the time, may embody yourselves in Christian fellowships and societies, with all tenderness and brokenness of heart, crying mightily to the Lord, that he would return and be reconciled unto the remnant of his heritage, and reclaim his captivate declarative glory out of the hands of the proud enemy; and we shall keep a correspondence with you, and help you with any whom the Lord sends forth unto us, clothed with his commission, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. The Lord, the Lord God, the covenanted God of *Britain and Ireland*, be with you.

The meeting likewise appointed some fast-days to be kept by the societies, *viz.* It was appointed that the 11th of *October* should be kept a day of public fasting and humiliation for our great and innumerable iniquities which have provoked the Lord for a season to deprive us of the unspeakable privilege of the gospel, and not endeavouring to order our hearts and conversations thereunto.

It was also appointed that the 25th of *October* should be publicly kept a day of fasting and prayer to the Lord, who hath given some refreshing pledges of his doing greater things, by his returning again (out of his mere mercy, notwithstanding of our great transgressions) with a blink of the blessed gospel; that he would now help us to improve the great mercy bestowed upon us, and keep us from provoking him again to remove the candle out of our candlestick.

As also, it was appointed that the 15th of *November* be kept a day of public thanksgiving to the Lord for his many and great mercies hitherto bestowed upon us, in not leaving us altogether in our low condition.

And it was appointed that the next General Meeting shall be upon the 28th of *November*, at *Glasgow*: and that the collections shall be brought there by the commissioners who come.

THE state of the land was still as before, by violent pressing of the Test and hearing of Curates, which were alas! much complied with by not a few: But, through grace, many were kept from both these abominations, choosing rather to suffer than to sin. And though the persecutions and trials which the societies were trysted with were not small, nor the reproach from friends who had mis-constructions of them were not few, which indeed was weighty, especially as coming from them; yet one thing did not a little alleviate and lighten the same, viz. the home-coming of Mr. James Renwick; whereby they were put in hope of, and did enjoy the gospel preached, which was very refreshing and reviving, after so long a famine of gospel-ordinances: And by the blessing of the Lord, it proved a mean to keep some from running upon, and to recover others from extremes on both hands. It was strengthening in that weary day, comforting in that sad, and enlightening in that dark and gloomy day. As before the last meeting, the societies were much misrepresented, so after it they were not less, but rather more; especially Mr. James Renwick was greatly misrepresented and reproached, occasioned by the reading of his testimony at the last meeting, which (particularly that part thereof concerning some ministers who were therein named) was very ill taken, and offended several persons, yea, from that time some of our number fell off from us. But as it was much talked of;

so it was much misrepresented, it being reported (which was believed by many) that he had excommunicated some of these ministers, which was far from his thoughts and intention; neither did the paper itself bear any such thing; for all that is in it concerning these ministers named therein, is his testimony against what he thought was wrong in their practice, and not one word of excommunication of them or any other.

THE General Meeting convened at *Woodside*, near Glasgow, upon the 28th. of *November*, 1683. After prayer, and modelling of the meeting, they approved of all that was done by the former meeting, *October* 3d; and particularly did agree with, and approve of that resolution concerning the oath of secrecy, which was no further to be imposed.

2dly, They agreed unto, and consented with a Protestation against the Scotch congregation at Rotterdam, for several causes therein contained; which was thereafter sent to Mr. Robert Hamilton, who put it in print, and sent some of them to Rotterdam. As this paper hath since been much spoken against, and condemned by many, so the societies upon more mature deliberation about it, although they looked upon the causes inserted therein materially considered and rightly applied, were true, and sufficient ground for a protestation, and desired that it might be looked upon as a standing testimony (together with what contentings have formerly been by some Scotch sufferers in that land) for the vindication of truth, and against the sad wrongs and abuses in that congregation, ay, and while the causes inserted were maintained, and the offence and scandal given, not removed; yet they were convinced, not only that there was an omission of the due method of going about such an action, when they had not given previous admonition to the persons protested against; but also some words and expressions were unsuitable, untender, bitter and offensive. But in regard the Protestation itself is in print, and the society's mind concerning it may be seen in their *Informatory Vindication*, what is said above may suffice here.

3dly, The meeting agreed upon two Letters, the one to the classis of Groningen, to whom they were very much obliged and indebted for the ordination of Mr. Renwick, and they thought it duty to signify their thankfulness

fulness in a letter ; which being translated into Latin was sent to them : And the other to several persons in *Friesland*, and more especially these in the city of *Leewarden*, who had various ways shewn their sympathy with the societies ; which letter was likewise sent.

4thly, It was appointed by the meeting that *Thomas Lining*, *William Nairn* and *Michael Shields* should go to *Fife*, and speak with some persons there, who had withdrawn with *James Ruffel* from their brethren, and were continuing in that separation : And out of brotherly love and kindness to them, to desire them to come and hear the gospel preached by *Mr. James Renwick*. Accordingly the foresaid persons went to *Fife*, and spoke with some of these people they were sent to. But to the end it may be the better known what they did there, and what answer they received, I shall here set down the report, subscribed by them all three, and shewn to the next meeting as an account of their diligence.

“ We, under-subscribers, being commissioned by the General Meeting, to go to the society of *Fife*, and invite them to hear the gospel faithfully preached by *Mr. James Renwick* : In obedience whereunto we went ; and at *Elie*, in *Fife*, upon the 14th of *December*, 1683, got some of them convened together, viz. three men and a boy, and about seven or eight women. When convened, before we would impart our commission to them, we thought it duty that one of ourselves should pray ; which when heard by them, they declared they would not join with us : When we saw them so, we forbore, and delivered our commission after this manner.—The General Meeting hath sent us to acquaint you, that the Lord out of his free love and infinite mercy hath visited his poor people in their low condition, in giving us the sweet and precious gospel again, in stirring up *Mr. James Renwick* a minister, faithfully to preach the same, and freely to testify against the sins and abominations of the time, to which we have been witness both in private and in public ; and considering our being bound in covenant together, and out of brotherly love and kindness to your souls, they earnestly desire and invite you to come and hear the same, and be partakers of that rich and unspeakable blessing the Lord hath bestowed.

“ After we had thus spoken, we desired an answer : Whereupon they declared they would neither hear him, nor join with us, because of the reasons and grounds they

had separated from us upon, before the said Mr. James went from Scotland. We desired they would instance them: They instanced the "paying of customs at ports, and in markets;" yet they said "they were clear to pay them at boats and bridges*." To which we replied, that we were not to justify the paying of customs, yet we could not drive so abruptly and inconsiderately to such a height of separation upon that head as they did. But they refused to debate any further anent them, because they affirmed that it was fully debated before; which we denied, as to the way that they had taken in stating a separation upon that head, especially so presumptuously. They said it was, and was to be seen in their public papers; which, when we desired to see, they said they had them not. And also, they affirmed that the not paying of customs was enacted at the meeting at Tala-linn, and put as an interrogation to the members thereof: Which we denied, two of us being present there. And likewise they said, they had other things against Mr. Renwick, and us both: We desired to hear them: They told us they were in their public papers. So all the ground they gave for refusing to hear the said Mr. James preach, was only this, that he does not as yet see the paying of customs, and joining with those who pay the same to be a ground of separation, and of debarring from the privileges of the church. And as for days of the week, and months of the year, they owned the same was not a ground of separation, yet adhered to that paper given in by James Ruffel to the General Meeting anent the same; and particularly to that part of it, which says,—"Those who own such names, serve themselves heirs to that same (if not greater) punishment, which God inflicted upon idolaters of old:" which is a real contradiction. This is truth, as witness our hands."

Sic Subscribitur,

THOMAS LINING.
WILLIAM NAIRN.
MICHAEL SHIELDS.

And lastly, the meeting appointed some days to be kept by the societies, and condescended upon the causes as follow. As

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* By this it is evident that they could not charge them with tolerating the paying of any other public burdens or taxes, otherwise they would not have failed to do it.

1st, It was appointed that the 5th of *December*, should be kept a day of public fasting and prayer unto the Lord, that he would either bridle the rage of enemies against our honourable friend and sufferer, *Earlstoun*, or carry him honourably through the trial; and also, that those most concerned in him may be kept by the Lord, and helped rightly to carry under their sad afflictions. The occasion of setting this day apart for the foresaid end, was the trials and tentations which they heard *Earlstoun* was at that time meeting with.

2^d, It was appointed that the 27th of *December* should be kept a day of public thanksgiving unto the Lord, for his conveening of us together upon the 23d of *November*, to hear his gospel preached, and bringing us all safely off, notwithstanding the great fury and diligence of enemies against us. This 23d of *November*, Mr. James Renwick preached at *Darmede*, which was the first public sermon he had in the fields; at which time the diligence of enemies was great against us, and being delivered from them, it was thought fit to set apart a day of thanksgiving for it.

3^d, It was appointed that the 25th of *January*, 1684, should be kept a day of public fasting and humiliation before the Lord, for our sinful walking under that (every way) sadly abused engagement unto secrecy.

And it was appointed that the next General Meeting should be upon the 21st of *February*, 1684, at *Auchengillock*; to which the Societies were to send the collections, and the said day was to be kept in prayer by these remaining at home.

HAVING given some relation of what was done at this meeting, I shall subjoin two letters agreed upon by them. First, the letter to the classis of Groningen; the next to the society in Friezland.

November 28, 1683.

Reverendissimi Domini vigilantissimi Pastores,

THE Lord having now, to our great joy and encouragement, restored unto us our beloved friend and minister, Mr. *James Renwick*, and brought him through many imminent dangers; (for which we desire to rejoice in him, praising his holy name) who hath given such an ample and favourable account of your real

concernedness for our Master's cause, and affection to and sympathy with us in *Scotland*, that we must burst out in expressing our sensibleness of, and joy in the same, by writing unto you: again and again blessing the Lord, and thanking you for the singular mercy which we enjoy, by your confirming of our foresaid beloved friend *Mr. James Renwick* in the work of the ministry (for which he was sent over unto you by us) whereof the Lord gives special evidences of his own approbation, being singularly with him in that great and weighty work, to our great refreshing and encouragement: and also testifying and confirming the truth of that faithful *Mr. William Brackel* minister at *Leewarden*, witnessed in his friendly testimony of our student before your Presbytery, viz. That the testificates and calls subscribed by us unto them, particularly to the foresaid *Mr. James Renwick*, were delivered into the hand of the right honourable the laird of *Earlston*. We acknowledge ourselves many ways your debtors, both in spirituals and temporals, and are very sensible of your care of the church of God, evidenced so many ways unto us in our low case and condition, now when the enemies of our Lord in this land have casten down the Lord's house to the ground, and laid his pleasant portion desolate, and casten many of us out of our houses, being violently persecute, and that unto death, with all the subtilty and cruelty which the powers of hell and earth can devise, O! the fury and wickedness of enemies is come to a great height, and the malice of backsliders is swelled to a great measure, not only Christianity but humanity being altogether given up by the most part of the nation; so that all things speak forth the cup of the *Amorite* and *Edomite* to be near full, and that the Lord is even at the doors with a great deluge of his wrath, to be let loose upon the generation. But in the midst of all our distresses and difficulties (O! blessed be the name of the Lord) we have no reason to complain, for he speaks comfortably to us in this wilderness; he is a present help to us in the time of our need, and puts songs in our mouths in the midst of this hot fire; and is wonderfully seen in hiding, preserving and encouraging us; it being no small refreshment unto us, that he hath put into your hearts to stand still and to hear our complaints, and to become companions with us in our tribulations; for which we desire to praise the Lord, and to pray unto him, that he

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who is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love may reward you, for putting to your hands to strengthen and help a wrestling and bleeding church; and that he may make you ever faithful in his vineyard, following your labours with his rich blessing; to the glory of his great name, and the advancement of his kingdom in the earth, and in the souls of his people. O! mind the distressed and afflicted, bleeding case of the once glorious church of *Scotland*, as we desire to mind you, both in public and in private. We remain,

*Your assured friends and obliged servants
to our full power in the Lord,*

Subscribed in our name by the clerk of our general meeting,

MICHAEL SHIELDS,

To the right honourable, truly gracious, and really sympathising Brethren and Sisters in Friesland, and more especially in the city of Leewarden,

November 28th, 1683.

THE Lord did vouchsafe such gracious and glorious privileges upon us, that he brought us unto a high pitch of reformation; and many engagements to be for him, beyond many (yea, we may say to the praise of his free grace, and with reflection upon our present ingratitude, beyond any) lands; but he hath been many ways provoked by us to lay us low as at this day, which indeed we must confess we have deserved, yea, and more at his hand; but we desire to take all in love from him, who chastneth and loves, and loves in chastisement; and in seeking by this hot and fiery furnace to get a remnant purified for himself, amongst whom he may take delight to dwell. And now when the furnace is still growing hotter and hotter, should not we look beyond the outside of dispensations, into the Lord's glorious purposes and intentions; who, the more hot he makes the furnace, minds to produce the more pure metal thereby? Also when we think upon (of which we are sure ye are not without the apprehensions) the sad and deplorable case of all national and other churches, by reason of unfaithful-
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ness to the Lord, little esteem of his precious truths, want of zeal for his glory, and not following him fully as he ought to be; we are indeed persuaded, that where he hath thoughts of love, and purposes of kindness, thither he will come, and sit as a refiner's fire to purge and refine. But, O! ever blessed be his holy and exalted name, he who is able to raise children unto *Abraham*, out of the stones, will not want a testimony for himself, and a company of living witnesses: and we may say, to the praise of his glorious free grace, and gracious condescendency to our once glorious, but now bleeding and wounded, yet wrestling and contending mother-church, that in our land he hath had this; we say, a company, a party whom he still honoured, and is yet honouring and helping to burst out with declarations, protestations, testimonies, resistances, and that unto blood against all the heinous indignities done to him, whom he hath not left helpless nor comfortless. And among our other refreshings from himself, this is one, and not a small one, that he hath stirred you, our right honourable and dearly beloved brethren and sisters, to wrestle so diligently, and to contend so faithfully, zealously and valiantly for our church; and to bear burden, and really to sympathize with us in our afflictions, trials and tribulations, evidenced by your sincere love, and great kindness unto, and singular sympathy with our right honourable friend *Mr. Robert Hamilton*, who hath been much dignified and owned of the Lord, in his many engagements, appearances, contendings and sufferings at home for the Lord's cause; and in his many wrestlings abroad, which ye are not ignorant of, having given many evidences of his care, diligence, faithfulness, and zeal for the Lord: And also evidenced by your great love and sympathy with our right honourable friend *Earlstoun*, and his persecuted and cast-out family, who is the branch of an old standing house for the Lord; he himself honoured to be greatly active for his cause, and now called to be immediately under the enemies lash upon that account. And, moreover, evidenced by the great charges ye have been at in helping our distressed and cast-out families, in collecting so liberally for the same; for which we desire to bless the Lord, and to thank you, praying earnestly that he himself may reward you, who will not forget your labour of love and compassion of us in our bonds. O!

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what shall we say, we are all members of one body, subject to one glorious head, our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath purchased us to himself: and this is manifested by you indeed. Therefore let us go on in evidencing the strict conjunction of us his members, that when one suffers, all suffer with it: and when one rejoiceth, all rejoice with it. And also making to appear our love to our lovely and blessed Lord, by following him fully; labouring not to be put off our ground by the violent and boisterous winds of persecution which we are tossed with, and which ye may expect to be liable unto. O! have we not a noble and glorious Captain to follow, who hath suffered more for us than we can do for him, *delivering himself for our offences, and rising again for our justification.* O! it is highly desirable to be like him; yea, such a high desire, that lost worm man durst not have attempted it, if the Lord himself had not, out of his infinite and free love, condescended both to provide the means, and call us unto it: and it is highly desirable to be like him in every thing, so also in his suffering, (*who was made perfect thro' suffering*) not being divided from him in his patience. O! shall we not look beyond what is in time, and in this howling but short wilderness, unto what he hath provided for, and promised unto those who overcome? who hath said, *They shall walk with him in white.*

Now, right honourable Friends, we cannot express the love we owe unto you; but we may say, we have our hearts united unto you, as we do not doubt but yours are also unto us, though we be not in the capacity to manifest the same, as you have done many ways: but we desire to be often and much at a throne of grace for you, begging that ye will be so for us, in our contendings and extreme sufferings. So remain,

Your hearty wellwishing, really endeared, and very much obliged brethren, sisters and servants in our ever blessed Lord,

Subscribed in our name, and by our direction, by
the clerk of our general meeting,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

*To all and sundry true Protestant Churches to whom
their presents may come.*

November 28th, 1683.

WE do not in the least doubt, but in some measure it is known unto you, how that our ancient and reformed church of *Scotland* did sometime gloriously flourish with the great and bright splendour of the true religion, so that her light was visible to all adjacent churches: but now, deservedly for our sinning against the Lord, we have occasioned his vineyard in our land to be overspread and trodden down with foxes, and devoured with the wild beasts of the field; we being under various and sad exigences, great persecutions and reproaches, which also, we may be persuaded are come unto your ear. The weighty consideration whereof (together with the great hope we have of your concernedness with us in our low and desolate case, whereunto, as to the external face of our church, we are redacted; yet dignified and helped, though weakly, but willingly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and for the privileges of the church of God) moved us to send and commissionate the right honourable Mr. *Robert Hamilton*, unto all you who are wellwishers unto the commonwealth of *Israel*, and that upon many deliberate and weighty grounds; knowing that our cause and case is sadly misrepresented unto you by the subtile dealings of our adversaries and backsliders, who are sinfully active, but most vigilant in giving misinformation, and false relations of what we act and do; as if our principles and proceedings were contrary to the written word of God, the supreme judge of all controversies, and true Protestantism. Whereas, we jointly and unanimously declare, that we neither maintain or hold any thing contrary to the scriptures of truth, our ancient laws ecclesiastic and civil, and our noble work of reformation; but desire (yea, and have been helped through the Lord's grace) to square our actions and proceedings according thereunto, for which we this day, and for more than the space of twenty years, are, and have been suffering afflictions, persecutions, outcastings, banishments, imprisonments, and reproaches, yea, and death itself.

We

We therefore, the true Protestant, Anti-popish, Anti-prelatick, Anti-erastian, and persecuted Presbyterian church of *Scotland*, do concredit this our Commissioner, giving him our full power, consent and assent, faithfully and truly to inform all true Protestants and reformed churches, kingdoms and commonwealths, unto which he shall or may come, of our present case, principles, former and later proceedings: and that we are only, through God's grace, labouring to keep ourselves still clean in the way of the Lord, as it hath been walked in by our predecessors, (of truly worthy memory) in their carrying on of our noble and glorious work of reformation, in the several steps thereof, from Popery, Prelacy, and Erastian supremacy; and it is upon these heads that our sufferings have been and are stated. And for the more clear and full knowledge thereof, we recommend you to the information of this our right honourable and faithful Commissioner, as being seen in all our affairs, and of one judgment, under the same sufferings with us; and also, while he was in our land, highly dignified and countenanced of the Lord in his many contendings and wrestlings, engagements, rencounters and appearances against the common adversary, contendings and wrestlings against defection and backsliding courses, and great and many sufferings for truth.

So we humbly intreat and desire that whatever information ye have gotten, or may get, from any hand whatever, either enemies or backsliders, particularly ministers who have forsaken the Lord, and deserted us, of us, our principles and proceedings, contrary to the word of God, our Covenants and engagements unto him, may not be credited nor believed by you, they being only false aspersions and calumnies, through malice, cast upon us, yea, nor contrary to the information of this our right honourable Trustee, and faithful Commissioner, whom and whose information we humbly, but earnestly desire and request all churches, kingdoms and commonwealths, whither he may come, to receive and entertain him, as ye would not reject the suits and petitions of the once glorious, but now afflicted, tessed, wounded, and bleeding, yet wrestling church of *Scotland*; and in receiving of him, it shall be as done to all of us. Therefore all ye lovers of *Zion*, do not flight, but ponder deeply, the sad case, we, as a share of the Protestant Interest, are redacted unto, holding up the same in your prayers

to the Lord ; for God calls all to sympathize together, and to consider, that the plottings, consultations, machievments and actings of adversaries, are intended against the whole ; and when one member suffers, all suffer with it. And we, for our parts, (which is all the remuneration that at the time we can give) shall not cease to pray for your flourishing in spirituals and temporals.

Subscribed in our name, and by our direction, by the clerk of our General Meeting.

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

They likewise sent a letter to Mr. William Brackel : The exact copy of which follows.

To the Right Reverend Mr. William a Brackel, Minister of the Gospel at Leewarden in Friezland.

Right Reverend and Dear Sir,

IN the time of the church her prosperity, there are multitudes that flow unto her, many of them having their eyes upon a worldly kingdom, not taking up rightly wherein the kingdom of Jesus Christ consists; who are no sooner disappointed of their carnal and sensual expectations, but presently they steer their course another way, and turn head-strong against what they seemed to be zealous for : But in a day of persecution, when Zion is in distress, and the adversary insulting, (especially in such a case as ours) when those who formerly put to their hand to rebuild the walls of fallen Jerusalem in troublous times ; yet the troubles increasing, they not only left their work, but also are pulling down what once they had shewn so much earnestness in building ; We say, in such a day, the stepping in of any with encouragement to the burden-bearers, and putting to their hands in helping them, makes both the Lord's hand to be the more seen in it, and the love of such to be the more manifested in it. So we cannot but bless and praise the *Holy One of Israel*, who hath visited us in our low condition, in putting it in the hearts of any to stand still and hear our complaints, and become companions with us in our tribulation ; and also to be sensible of your care of the church of God from the many evident tokens thereof,

thereof, which we have clearly seen, by your laying out yourself to the uttermost of your power for the advancement of his kingdom, and encouragement of his followers; and particularly by your being such an instrument to provide for us, both in spirituals and temporals, which we are not in capacity to remunerate: Neither is that the thing (we know) which you have your eye upon; seeking only to approve yourself to your Master, that when he comes, he may say, *Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* However, we hold ourselves many ways obliged unto you, being content to be your debtors, and withal humbly giving you many hearty thanks for your friendly testimony of our students before the Presbytery of Groningen, we testifying and confirming the truth of what you witnessed, to wit, That their testificates subscribed by us, were delivered by us into the hands of the honourable laird of Earlstoun; and also for your activity and care anent the ordination of Mr. James Renwick, whereof the Lord hath given *Testimonies of his approbation*; and furnishes ground of expecting yet further. O blessed be the name of the Lord, who hath visited us in our low condition, and hath granted us a refreshing, when the virgin daughter of Zion was swooning in the streets for lack of the breasts, and hath given us a new pledge of his returning again; inviting us to the chambers of his protection, and there to hide ourselves until the indignation be overpast.

Now, we shall not speak of your care of, and sympathy with our distressed and cast out families, as to their temporal condition, evidenced by your liberality unto them; knowing that it was more easy for you to shew kindness, than to hear of it again. But it is matter of praise unto us, that among the members of Christ, there is such an evidence of being of that body, that when one suffers, all suffer with it. However, we must be holden excused at your hand, for not mentioning of this, or expressing nothing of our sense thereof in our last letter unto you, because it was neither from our insensibleness of your care, diligence anent, and sympathy with us, nor from an unthankful frame of spirit, but was occasioned only by reason of the absence of our right reverend and beloved friend and faithful minister, Mr. James Renwick, who had all the information with him.

O right reverend and dear Sir, Go on in your care for the church of God. Go on in contending for his noble cause; and he who hath honoured you so nobly to manage his cause and our cause, yea amongst these men-ministers belonging to the nation of Scotland, whose tongues and doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory, and which have occasioned the ruin of *Jerusalem* and the fall of *Judah*, will yet help *and uphold you with the right-hand of his righteousness*, to carry on the same against all opposites; so, as ye tender the present case of our wounded and bleeding church, we jointly, unanimously, and earnestly desire, that ye would lay yourself wholly out to stop and hinder the proceedings of that man, James Ruffel, (whose carriage at home was very destructive to the cause, and offensive to the church of God, and is now come abroad unto you to make it more so) and all aiders, and assisters of, compliers with, and connivers at him and his way, be who they will: We say, Go on, and your case shall be holden up unto the Lord, as he will therein assist a broken and afflicted church, which is troubled on every side; yea perplexed, yet not in despair; persecuted with all the fury of hell, yet not forsaken; cast down to the ground and covered with dust, yet not destroyed. This is indeed our case. For the fury of enemies is come to a great height, and the malice of backsliders is swelled into a large measure, so that the cup of the *Amerite* and *Edomite* is fast filling up. Our houses are cast down, our wives (yea some in child-bed) with our young ones cast out. But what is the matter of all this, for the Lord's holy mountain is laid desolate, and his house thrown down to the ground; and for our parts, (O praise him all ye that love him) he suffers us not to complain, but puts songs in our mouths in the midst of this hot fire; and though enemies are not only permitted to threaten, but even to execute their threatenings, yet we may say in some measure, The heart of the righteous is bold as a lion, and is by Jehovah's assistance above the fear of what man can do.

O what shall we say, all things look as if the Lord were at the doors with heavy wrath and sad judgments, with an overflowing deluge to make the land desolate; But blessed be his holy name, he shall be as an hiding-place unto his remnant *from the wind, as a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a*

great rock in a weary land. And he is testifying his willingness to be such unto any who will come unto him, by sending forth a call thereunto, which is to us such a cordial as makes many bitter ingredients in our cup not to be felt.

Now the Lord who hath stirred you up to be concerned with us, in all the circumstances of our case, reward your pains and labour of love.—Mind Scotland's case in public and private, as we desire to mind you. So we remain,

Your affectionate and obliged friends in the Lord,

Subscribed by our direction, and in our name, by the Clerk of our General Meeting,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

GLASGOW, Nov. 28, 1683.

It may not be improper to insert here, a Letter written by Michael Shields to Mr. Robert Hamilton, from the original letter written with his own hand, altho' it be not in the manuscript register.

Right Honourable Sir,

ALTHOUGH unacquaint and unfit to write to any, and especially to one in your circumstances, yet I have taken upon me to write this line to you, desiring and designing thereby to evidence my respect unto, and sympathy with you, (much honoured of the Lord) hoping ye will take in good part what I write. And now what shall I say, but magnify and praise the holy name of the Lord upon your behalf, who hath raised and stirred you up from among your brethren, to appear so eminently, and manage his cause so nobly both at home and abroad against his enemies; yea, against those of whom better things were expected; when your mother-church was sitting as a widow with her tears on her cheeks, and like the woman chased into the wilderness by the dragon and his angels, and few of her sons which she hath brought forth to take her by the hand. This calls for great humility, fear, watchfulness, love, zeal, and thankfulness at your hands.

May

May we not sit down, and wonder and admire at the matchless free love and condescendency of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, not only in redeeming and saving any of the lost posterity of Adam, from sin, hell, death, and the grave; but also at this, in dignifying and honouring any of these redeemed ones, who are weak, unworthy and empty creatures in themselves, to appear, contend, witness and suffer for him, his honourable cause and precious truths, when he sees fit to call and single them out. Is not this to make his strength appear in weakness, his wisdom in foolishness, and that he may get all the glory, to whom only it belongs, and the poor creature laid low in its own fight? We have gotten proofs of this in our day; and he is yet triumphing in the chariot of free love and matchless independency. O! therefore, let us cry out, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto his name be the glory, the honour and the praise.*—

What though we, while walking through this howling, but short wilderness, be reproached, hunted and pursued, *men wondered at, killed all the day long, and counted as sheep for the slaughter*, and be persecuted by all the fury of devils, and rage of men? If God be glorified, and his name exalted thereby, what lose we? It was for this noble end (which is the highest end that man could have been created for) that he who is not capable of any additional glory from any of his creatures, created us for; Let us therefore answer that noble end of our creation, in whatever station (whether doing or suffering) he puts us in, for in doing so, all the good redounds to ourselves. Let us rejoice in tribulation and persecution for his sake, seeing there is a glorifying of him in the fires. The way to IMMANUEL'S land, that sweet land, afar off, is not strowed with roses, which our soft and ill natures love best, but thro' many tribulations we must enter. This is but following the footsteps of our Glorious Head, King, and Captain, *who was made perfect through suffering*: and of the cloud of witnesses who *went through great tribulations, and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, who are now singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, with crowns on their heads, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands*, in token of their victory over all their enemies.

Much honoured and dear Sir, The poor suffering and wrestling remnant of the bleeding and wounded church of Scotland hath matter both of sorrow and of joy, lamentation

mentation and rejoicing. Their cup is mixed with sweet and bitter, and bitter and sweet; yea, they may sing of mercy and judgment. As upon the one hand, they have cause, yea great cause to weep, mourn, lament and lie in the dust before the Lord for their heinous steps of defection and great sins, which have provoked him to make his once glorious church like a desolate wilderness, lay his pleasant portion desolate, and give up the dearly beloved of his soul into the hand of his proud enemy, yea to hide his face and stand aloof from our foes. O this calls for weeping, mourning and lamentation! So, upon the other hand, they have cause to rejoice in this, That the Lord hath (to the praise of his glorious free grace be it spoken) kept and preserved a remnant, (even in the midst of such horrid backslidings) whom he hath hitherto, and is yet helping and dignifying to witness, contend and suffer for him, his noble cause and sweet truths, against all opposers. And now he hath (notwithstanding of our former abuse of the sweet gospel) visited us with a glimpse of the glorious gospel, in raising up a minister faithfully to preach the same, of which I have been a witness. O this calls for great thankfulness at our hands! Should not we trust in him for the future, and take this as a token for good, and that he who hath done this for his own name's sake, will yet do greater things for us? Ought we not to love him, and delight in him, and walk in humility, fear and trembling before him, lest we provoke him to leave us? O! let us cry and pray unto him that he would not leave us, but return and be gracious for his own name's sake, and altogether break our bonds, both spiritual and temporal; make his glorious gospel have a free course through the land, build his own house again, and bring down the insolent and proud enemy.

Right honourable Sir, The General Meeting desired me, in their name, to signify to you, their unanimous and earnest desire, that as hitherto the Lord hath helped you to be active for his cause, so also, that ye would lay out yourself to cause these two young men, Messrs William Boyd and John Flint, to come home.

Thus wishing and praying that the Lord God may be with you, comfort, lead, and strengthen you. I remain,

Right Honourable Sir,

Your Humble Servant

MICH. SHIELDS.

Edinburgh, Jan. 15th, 1684.

THE case of the country between the last meeting (in *November*) and this, cannot be expressed and shewn in few words; however a hint thereof may be given in general. The cruelty of enemies was great, and their rage keen; and they were at no small pains to entrap poor people, and to get them made obnoxious to, and brought under the lash of their wicked laws, by enquiring questions about owning the authority, and if Bothwel-bridge was rebellion, &c. making the disowning of the former, and the owning of the latter to be criminal. Sinful impositions were many; and alas! the fainting and yielding thereunto of not a few, was very sad. Public, faithful warning concerning sins, duties and dangers, was very rare. There being little public preaching, and none in the fields except Mr. James Renwick, that was heard of. And as the condition of the land in general was sad and deplorable; so also in particular was that of the United Societies, some of them being cruelly murdered on scaffolds, some imprisoned, and others put to hidings, chafings, out-castings, and weary wanderings. But in the midst of these calamities, one thing was very refreshing and encouraging to them, which was the enjoyment of the gospel, which was faithfully and freely preached to them by Mr. James Renwick, and warning given of the sins and snares of the time. And when others were at ease, he was at no small pains in travelling and wandering through the country about his Master's work, and was oft in danger of enemies, and in distress by cold and weariness, yet chearful under the same. But these opportunities of the gospel-ordinances were very encouraging and reviving to the Societies in that sad time: Yet they had one ingredient in their cup, which in some respect was more bitter than what they met with from enemies; and that was the contendings they judged they were called to have (and the reproaches cast on them upon that account) with many of the godly on the left hand, who were guilty of defection, and defended the same; and with some on the right hand who were running upon extravagancies: the chief of those upon the right hand was James Ruffel, who with Patrick Grant, &c. after they had separated from the Societies, they went abroad; and coming to Groningen immediately after the ordination of Mr. James Renwick, they had some contendings with him concerning these things upon which they had separate. After
he

he was come away, Mr. John Flint joined with them, who was useful to them in their learning, which they set about; as also, for putting in Latin some papers for them. They had no small contendings with Mr. Robert Hamilton, whom they much contradicted, vilipended and opposed: Likewise they misrepresented several of the proceedings of the Societies, which was sad in itself, and it being to, and before strangers, made it more lamentable. At length they gave an information in Latin, subscribed by James Ruffel and Patrick Grant, unto *John a Mark* Professor of divinity, and minister at Groningen; wherein were several misrepresentations of some of the proceedings of, and reflections upon the societies, and in particular upon Mr. Renwick; a double whereof Mr. Hamilton sent home, inclosed in a letter, and desired that an answer might be written to the same; which coming but a little before the day that the last meeting appointed for the General Meeting, the foresaid answer, and some letters which were thought fit to be sent abroad, could not be ready against that time. Whereupon it was delayed till the 20th of *March* thereafter.

WHICH day, A General Meeting did convene at *Panbreck*. After prayer, and modelling of the meeting, some resolutions were fallen upon; an account whereof followeth.

At former meetings there were several questions enquired at the members thereof, to the end that it might be known that they owned the testimony, and were free of public scandal; but these not being written, it was thought fit for order's sake, and that they might be the better known and remembered, to draw up the same in a paper; which being done and agreed unto by this meeting, (so far as I can remember) and to be made use of afterwards. Accordingly for some years these questions were enquired at the members of the General Meetings; which was much spoken against and condemned, especially the last interrogation thereof. But somewhat being said concerning these questions in the account of the meeting at the *Priesthill*, *March* 15, 1682. And also, the Society's mind being made known thereanent in their *Informatory Vindication*, I shall say no more here about them, but insert a true copy thereof.

Interrogations anent the abounding scandals of the time ; whereunto all such as are admitted members of our General Meetings are to answer.

But in the entry, these who are to be interrogate, must be known to be blameless as to their private walk, in being free of uncleanness, profanity, drunkenness, theft, swearing, lying, or any other thing that goes under the name of scandal : And so anent the public may be interrogate as followeth.

1. Do ye know the principles and practice of these Societies from whom ye have your commission ? 2. Do ye and they own our Covenants and engagements, our faithful Declarations and Testimonies ? 3. Are ye and they free of giving any manner of bond to the enemies ? 4. Are ye and they free of paying Cess, Locality and Militia-money ? 5. Are ye and they free of paying stipends to the Curates, or indulged ? 6. Are ye and they free of taking the enemies pass or protection ? 7. Are ye and they free of answering unto enemies their courts ? 8. Are ye and they free of capitulation any manner of way with the enemies, or furnishing them with commodities ? 9. Are ye and they free of counselling and consenting to any in their compliance, any of the fore-said ways, for you, in your name ? 10. Are ye and they free of joining with the Curates or indulged, by hearing them preach, accepting the administration of the sacraments at their hands, subjecting to their discipline, or being married by them ? 11. Are ye and they free of joining any of the fore-said ways with the complying, unfaithful, and silent ministers of the time ?

There was also a long paper read to, and agreed upon by the meeting, directed to Mr. *John a Mark*, professor of divinity of Groningen, and — *Phelingius*, elder, &c. ministers of the gospel there, and to all others whom it might concern ; containing a reply to an information subscribed by James Ruffel and Patrick Grant, and given in to the fore-said ministers (some account whereof is given above) which information being translated into English, was also read to the meeting. The paper of reply was subscribed by the Præses, and the most part, if not the whole meeting, and being translated into Latin, both were sent to those to whom it was directed ; which was very well accepted of, and received by

by them. But in regard the information and reply are both long, the inserting of them here shall be forborne.

The Meeting likewise agreed upon a letter to William Gordon, brother to the laird of Earlstoun, student of the law at Groningen; which accordingly was sent to him, In it they desire that he would be serviceable, strengthening, and encouraging to Mr. Robert Hamilton in that work, wherein he was intrusted by the Societies.

Also, the meeting agreed upon a letter to Mr. Boyd, then at the university of Groningen; wherein they desired him with all expedition to come home, to the end there might be a clear understanding between him and the Societies; for by reason of some jealousies of him, they could not desire him to go on in that work for which he was sent abroad; and therefore it was thought expedient to call him home, that it might be known what was further their duty towards him. This letter was accordingly sent to him, and he came home about the beginning of June.

In like manner they sent a letter to Mr. Flint, then at Groningen; wherein they shewed, that knowing he had employed his power for a considerable time in giving false narrations of the contendings and sufferings of the societies, striking in with such as had groundlessly separate from them, joining hand and issue with them, and strengthening them, by spreading abroad into foreign churches their reproachful misinformations in the Latin tongue; and also laboured to counteract the pains their Commissioner had been at to give foreign friends a true impression of our sufferings, and the heads whereupon the same was stated. They having sent him abroad for the perfecting of his studies, that he might have been serviceable to them in the work of the Lord. But finding that he had so stated himself (as is said) against them, did desire him to come home, and answer to what was to be laid to his charge for his carriage abroad. This Letter was accordingly sent to him, but he did not come home upon it, but wrote an answer thereto, wherein he justifies himself, and hath several uncharitable reflections upon the societies, and refuses to come home; however, in July or August thereafter, he came, and in his home-coming he preached, and married two persons; as also, when in this land, he preached, giving out that he had a power and licence so to do, from the ministers

of Groningen. But what power he had from them may appear from a letter subscribed by Mr. John Abringa, minister at Groningen, and written in name of all the ministers there to Mr. Robert Hamilton; a copy of which he sent to this land: The tenor whereof followeth:

Much honoured Sir,

FOR answer to your Letters, take this short narrative of the proceedings of us ministers, in the case of Mr. Flint. He desiring an *Examen*, for the end he might lawfully preach the word of God unto the faithful remnant of the church of Scotland: We knowing before, his fiery wit, and being sufficiently acquainted how he had engaged himself against those in whose name he first came to us, especially against Mr. Renwick: and justly fearing he would but blow up the flames of schism, and rent the bowels of his mother-church, would not give our consent to his petition, lest we should any way act against our general intention, to contribute as much as in us lieth, to the furtherance of the edification of the church of Scotland; or be partakers of another man's sin. He being after this manner frustrate of his purpose, went to famous Professor *Mark*, asking of him a testimony of his demeanour, which is given to him, as is wont commonly to be done to students when they return home from the university; which being done, the said Mr. Flint went therewith, not to all, but to the most of us ministers, from house to house, craving the subscriptions of their names; which they did accordingly without scruple, because containing nothing in it but a testimony of his studies and life, with an express clause of the known contention, and adjoined recommendation of peace and unity with his brethren. This is the whole business faithfully related. If Now Mr. Henderson will take this bare testimony, as if there were therein a power given to Mr. Flint to do the work of the ministry, his gross mistake may be imputed to his silly ignorance in things of this nature. But if Mr. Flint himself should make a like construction thereof, it would be in him not a misinferring fault, but flatly an impudent untruth; and if so be, he would thereupon assume unto himself any ministerial power whatsoever in that holy ordinance, we would hold it as a desperate attempt, a
bold,

bold, irregular intrusion, and the fearful sin of those who run unsent, before they be lawfully sent. The bare reading of the said testimony will give so much light to an understanding reader as to confute Mr. Flint's presumption. Therefore we need not recall any commission or licence given to Mr. Flint, because none was ever given him; he not being examined nor installed into the ministry with imposition of the hands of the Presbytery: Though we cannot help it, if he will take such liberty of tongue and conscience as wrongfully to wrest our actions, altogether free from the least shew of what he would draw out of it.

Professor *Mark* takes at present his abode at *Franker*; if you be pleased, you may find full satisfaction of him anent the foresaid Testimony. Thus resting, we commend you and all the faithful ones unto God and the word of his grace, for bodily and spiritual welfare.

Your hearty Well-wisher,

And in the name of all the ministers of the Gospel at Groningen.

JOHANNES ABRINGA, *Ecc—s, Groning.*

Des. July 10th, 1684.

MOREOVER the meeting sent a letter to James and Thomas Ruffel's, and Patrick Grant, representing to them their sinful ways in misrepresenting their case, and misinforming strangers, contradicting their faithful commissioners, &c. Withall desiring them to come home, and answer to what was to be laid to their charge, as they would not declare themselves to be obstinate in their unjust separation from the societies. This letter was sent, but they wrote an answer thereto, with many bitter expressions, and uncharitable reflections, &c.

However falling into disrespect they left Groningen shortly after.

Here, as would appear, there have been some sheets of the manuscript lost, before it was bound, (the pages of it not being numbered till of late) as there were two meetings, which are wholly wanting. The first was July

by 31st. The second was October 15th. Yet as there are several letters written by them, the Autographs of which, being yet extant, it will not be improper to insert so many of them as can be found.

The first shall be an abstract of a letter of Mr. Hamilton's, in his own hand writing, to the General Meeting, dated May 8th, 1684.

Much honoured of the Lord,

I Received your very seasonable and refreshing letters, informations, and protestations. As to the letters to Friesland, I delivered them, and to my own knowledge, I can say, they were greatly blessed to severals in this land, putting some to search the cause more than ever, and others ashamed that they had done so little for it; and putting the more serious to bless the Lord, and acknowledge his goodness in ever letting them know of that church, and honouring them to be companions with any of her children in their tribulation; all which, and much more than I can express, they had signified unto you, had it not been for the want of language: However, they laid it jointly upon me, to acquaint you, my very dear and honourable Brethren, of their real love, and great sympathy toward you, as also, their adherence to that Noble Cause you are honoured to own and contend for.

As to James Ruffel his affair, so soon as the information, with your diligence toward these in *Fife*, and your letters calling Flint and them home, were turned into Latin, I went to Groningen and delivered them first to professor *Marck*, and then acquainted the ministers of them; who were all glad to hear of the letters to the *Classis*, and these informations. And every one I spake with signified a greater desire than another to read them, and declared their great desire to serve you,—as for that sad missive of J. Ruffel to D. Steel, &c. having turned it into Latin, I delivered it to the minister whom they alledged did own them, and had been present at that conference, who read it in the presence of Messrs Gordon and Boyd, and me, but with great astonishment, almost at every sentence crying out, O great and manifest untruths! and kept the letter, to challenge them upon it: However, I shall omit that affair until another occasion, when, if the Lord will, I may give you a fuller

ler account of his management in this place: O he, and that whole company have been, and are a proud and cruel enemy: As for what they have done against me, I bless the Lord, I can forgive them as heartily, as if they had never done it.—Their cause and way, hath ever been loathsome to all Groningen, altho' they all told me, that they had bound up their hands from any more acting, speaking, or praying in public for our church, not that they trusted that company, but that they by Flint their mouth, had published abroad that whatever informations I had given were false, and adding most dreadful and bloody reproaches, especially upon Mr. Kenwick and me, and all who were not for them.

As to the protestation against the Scots congregation at R——, I am now printing it, which I intend to spread in this land; I shall also send some of them home. I find they were turning their whole edge against me formerly, and by their old subtille treacherous way, making strangers believe that there was nothing worth the speaking of, betwixt you and them, save some little thing in the Sanquhair Declaration, and Queen's-ferry Paper; as if forsooth, they had not both left and betrayed the cause, and the wrestling Remnant long before that.

As to your letters and commission, you have been pleased to send,—as they were very undeserved by me; so the Lord knows that they often make me to tremble, when I think upon them, being sensible of my own insufficiency and weakness, for so grezt a work. However, as I cannot but acknowledge and be sensible of your kindness towards me; so I cannot but accept, and endeavour to improve it, so far as may be for the advancing of the Lord's cause, and publishing, as he shall assist, the great and mighty works that he hath done for us, and our fathers, and for that poor speckled bird, and bush burning, yet not consumed, the church of SCOTLAND.

O honoured and very dear Brethren, be not discouraged, but encourage yourselves in the Lord, the KING OF SAINTS: Though few and every way contemptible like, yet it is JEHOVAH'S Cause, who is the Lord of hosts: He is engaged for you, and what can Omnipotency not do?

O honoured O greatly honoured Scotland, above all nations, to display Christ's standard for the truth, to carry, and keep it up against all opposition; yea and to
state

state the cause, and declare war against the bloody and whorish beast, and all his supporters, whether right, or left hand enemies. O who could have believed that the that the poorest, and most contemptible among the nations, poor Scotland, should have been thus honoured, or that she should have maintained such a long and costly warfare, against so bloody, so mighty, so subtle, so rich, and numerous armies, recruited again and again, from the very stool of Rome, and from all the courts of Antichrist, yea with all the policy, cruelty and subtilty that hell itself could invent, a war, not only foreign but intestine; maintained, not by nobles, gentry, statemen, experienced warriors, nor by great and learned ministers; but by a poor silly, feckless like company, enabled to do great exploits, and to counter-act the deepest counsels that have ever been managed against a poor church, and that notwithstanding of the many treacheries carried on against them, by their own ministers, and pretended brethren amongst themselves.

O behold and wonder! O praise, praise and be encouraged, for great is the Lord our God, *the lion of the tribe of Judah*. O let every soul cry out, *not unto us, not unto us, but unto his name belongs the glory, the honour and praise.*

Let nothing discourage you, or make you lower your top-sails; hold up the gospel, cost what it will; he has often, yea often declared his good pleasure in that way, in defending, sheltering, blessing and encouraging the followers thereof. And he shall yet make the greatest of his enemies strike sail thereto.

O honoured and dear Brethren, one field-preaching this day, (when by a wicked law it is interdicted) is a greater testimony for Christ, and his cause, than all our lives are worth (read Dan. vi. 7, — 10.) yea than all the preachings I know of in the world this day. O be much in prayer to God, for our worthy friend Mr. James, who is the minister, this day in the world, that I durst venture my life with, and if it might please the Lord to call me to that land, if my heart deceive me not greatly, I would count it a greater honour to carry his wallet, than to wear a crown; I hope he is a son of many prayers, both at home, and abroad, and one that Satan kythes much malice at, O that he may spoil his kingdom, and advance greatly the kingdom of our sweet Lord Jesus: I doubt not but ye are looking out for
storms

storms, for I think there is a chattering of the poor birds here, before the bitter winter come on, a blast before the storm. O I think there shall be no shelter ere it be long, save under the shadow of the Almighty: and O but that shall be made yet sweeter, and far more refreshing to some, even in time, than either men or angels shall ever be able to express, for the life of faith is never half experienced, as long as there is a dry inch without the ark to set our foot upon. But now the Lord's people are called to wait upon him, to mind duty, and seriously to ponder, what the time, the opportunity, and dispensations under which they are at present call for, waxing strong in the Lord and in the power of his might; for yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.

Thus wishing that the Lord God may lead you as a flock through the wilderness, by counsel, protection, and direction, making fresh and living springs of comfort, life and consolation accompany you. I remain,

Much honoured, and my dearest Brethren, your real sympathizer and servant, in the work of the Lord.

May 8th, 1684.

ROBERT HAMILTON.

P. S. I received a short line from my Brother in Groningen, shewing that Thomas Russel was lately at professor *Marck*, desiring a sight of your answer to their accusation, and of the subscribers names, upon seeing of which, he said they were a whine bairns. And as for David Steel, he called him a poor ignorant *body*. John Henderson is daily expected at Groningen, with a Call from Fife, for him to come home and preach the gospel. O horrid actings! But I hope God will both discover and counter-act them, I think they are of the evil spirits that will be best thrown down by faith's weapons (fasting and prayer) for their way is (as of all sectaries) to reproach dreadfully all that opposes them: except that, they have no other refuge.

O my dear Brethren, the Lord seems to be making a costly building in Scotland.—O its strength and beauty shall yet be wonderful to the nations about: wait without wearying, and fight without fainting; hold off rocks on all hands; your trials, yea the depth of Jordan is yet to pass: But the Lord is able to save to the utter-

most; and when he shall take the coverings off his house, bring it above board, ye shall be made to say that all the charges are well wared.

Now I must end, though loth to part; I hope ye will mind me, and lay it upon all to do it. The blessing of him that was separated from his brethren be with you all.

ROBERT HAMILTON.

Here follows a Letter from the General Meeting, July 31st, 1684.

The contending and suffering distressed Remnant of the Church of Scotland.—To the Right famous John a Marck, Professor of Divinity, in the University of Groningen.

Right famous Sir,

IF we should forget you, we should prove altogether ungrateful, for we have had (by the information of our right honourable delegate, and such of our friends as have been with you) held out unto us large proofs of the refounding of your bowels of sympathy towards us, of your care and kindness many ways manifested, which to us, a poor people in the furnace of affliction, is no small encouragement, and refreshment, considering that the Lord hath put you in such an eminent capacity of doing good, not only to us, but to his church throughout the whole world.

O employ (as heretofore you have done) your place, and lay out your gifts, which God hath bountifully bestowed upon you, for himself, and the reviving of his church throughout the earth: What is so desireable, as to do for Christ, and to suffer with him? His cross is more to be esteemed than the riches, pomp and gallantry of this world; yea, he who speaks comfortably to his church in the wilderness gives so much of his company with his cross, as she is made to cry out, that her lines are fallen to her in pleasant places; we are so convinced of the tender feeling which ye have of our distresses and perplexities, and confident of the continuance thereof, as that we know we need not now crave the same; however we make this humble address unto you, earnestly begging, that ye would recommend (not ours but) the
Lord's

Lord's cause, contended and suffered for by us; and our deplorable, and lamentable case, unto foreign churches: That so the Lord's work may be strengthened, and the spirits of such as are in the furnace of affliction revived; and that there may be a right understanding amongst Zion's well-wishers, how their common cause and interest stands, for, as the rage of the adversaries of truth is insatiable; so their purposes are not against a share of us only, but the whole gospel interest.

We desire likewise a line from your hand unto ourselves, for you abundantly know what an orphan-condition we are in, and how we get no rest from grappling with extreme difficulties. And because we look upon you as a *father*. Therefore we make the more bold to desire you to lay it upon that reverend learned and pious Presbytery of Groningen to clear themselves of that foul aspersion of Erastianism, and defending of corruption, which they are charged with, by these who have made defection from our church. For we may with grief of heart rehearse it, that these ministers who have surrendered up the privileges of Christ's house, and deserted his followers, make their malice no more to appear in reproaching us, than in reproaching that famous Presbytery; yea, their expressions are such, as a tender heart would not find freedom to rehearse them again. And now we clearly see, that they oppose themselves not only to us, our wrestlings, and sufferings, some of them saying no less, than that they could deliver us up into the hands of the common adversary, because we desire to hold fast what we have received, to quit with all our own things, before we quit with Christ. But they put another face upon it, branding us, as if we were the only incendiaries of church and state: Whereas, it is only the kingdom of Satan that we endeavour to give no peace unto: But also (we say) they oppose themselves to that venerable Presbytery: yea and all reformed churches whose praise-worthy ways, are a testimony against their backslidings. But sure we are, that these noisome winds which they raise in the air, shall tend to the more refining of it; and their continued opposition to truth, shall make it more clear, and precious, and tend to the vindication of the common gospel interest.

Likewise, though we ourselves be not in the least doubt about it, having seen his testificate, and heard the same by the information of our honourable Delegate,

and others whom we credit ; yet it would be strengthening to us against our antagonist, if that venerable Presbytery should in their long longed for letter, insert that the ordination of Mr. James Renwick was purely Presbyterian, and binding him to the word of God, and the reformation of the church of Scotland, and to subject himself to the discipline of this church, according to the same.

The Lord's dispensations give to observe clearly, that ye, and we, are much called to study to be one in him ; for without any difficulty we discern that our opposites are become your opposites, and yours are become ours. Let us therefore flee in unto the Lord by frequent and fervent prayer, that he may lead us in the way of truth and holiness, where the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err. Let us only study to deny our own strength, which is but weakness, and our own wisdom, which is but folly, that we may trust in the Lord with our whole hearts, and so be fitted for displaying a banner against all his adversaries, with this motto upon it : *The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge : our sowing in tears, doth promise a reaping time in joy ; for he will give unto such as are mourning in Zion, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.*—Therefore let us wait upon him, and encourage ourselves in him ; for his appearing for the church is still seasonable.

Now the Lord God be with you, and make you as a brazen wall and an iron pillar against all Zion's opposers, and give you to fight the good fight of faith, enduring to the end, that ye may get the crown, whose motto is, **TO THE OVERCOMERS.** In your prayers always mind us, a poor, distressed, bleeding, and perplexed people. Who remain,

*Your really obliged friends, and always obedient
Servants in the Lord.*

Subscribed in our name, and by our direction, by the clerk of our General Meeting.

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

Given and Subscribed at —

JULY 31st, 1684.

From

From the contending and suffering reformed church of Scotland, to their right honourable and trusty Delegate Mr. Robert Hamilton.

July 31st, 1684.

Right hon. and dearly beloved in the Lord,

IT is like, our correspondence together, by reason of the distance of place, your intended travels, and the difficulty of transmitting letters, may be for a season interrupted. However, as we are bound in duty, we shall endeavour, through the Lord's gracious assistance, to keep up a mindfulness of you, and that work wherein the Lord hath employed you for us, always praying the Lord may direct you wisely to manage his cause against all his opposites; (as in a great measure he hath done heretofore) may make you a brazen wall and an iron pillar in his house; may bless your labours and travels; and that, when his holy will is, he (preserving you in your work) may restore you unto us, loaded with the spoils of Antichrist, trophies of the kirk of Christ, and the longed-for fruits of your painful labours.

O right honourable and trusty Commissioner, Go on in your work, fear not men, the cause is the Lord's, and he will gloriously own it. What shall we say to his praise and to your encouragement, but we are meeting with many proofs of his power and faithfulness, even when our furnace is hottest; we may say, he is still delivering us, either by preventing trials, or supporting under trials; he, as it were, lays the bridle upon the mane of adversaries, and yet lets it be seen that in some measure they cannot get us reached. O! how glorious is he in wisdom, power, holiness justice, goodness and truth; he is laying pledges into our hands that he will do great things for us, whereof we shall be glad, and which he shall proclaim among the heathen. We are persuaded he is posting upon his way to appear for his broken and buried work; he will come at an unexpected time, and in an unexpected manner, and happy shall they be whom he will find at their work, and who are not sleeping with the generality of this generation: But sure we are, there are sad days abiding such as are dealing with a slack hand this day, and who refuse to answer his call now,
when

when he is many ways presenting himself to his people, and testifying his willingness to return again to them. O! we do not doubt but that he will return, and that suddenly; and he hath great mercies abiding these that are waiting for him; but judgments, judgments, judgments we are sure shall usher them in. Let us prepare to wade through judgments toward his mercies; and O! noble way that he takes, for we cannot be otherwise prepared for mercies.

How shall we open up our hearts, or unfold our thoughts unto you? The Lord he is God and the Captain of our salvation, a cleared fight whereof would obscure all the difficulties that are in the way, and carry the eye over both the long, weary, slimy, and thorny wilderness, and the proud swellings of Jordan, beholding and contemplating the good and promised land. We hope the Lord hath taught you better than to regard opposition in your way of serving and following him, for the more sad your ways be, the more glorious shall be your victory; you will misken yourself, when, instead of a crown of thorns, you get an immortal crown of glory put upon your head, and a cloathing of white raiment, always beholding him who is the wonder and praise of the family of that higher house.

But now, we commit you to the Lord for directing, comforting and supporting grace, praying that he may be with you in your intended travels, and make your pains tend to the up-raising of his work; and for what he hath done by you, we desire to bless him, putting a prize upon all his mercies, especially upon that inestimable benefit of his gospel, which is as reviving from the dead. Let us, if possible, hear from you, ere you depart from the place where you now are, and let us know wherein it lies in our power to be encouraging and strengthening unto you. So again, we leave you upon the good hand of your God and our God, hoping that we need not desire you in prayer to be mindful of us, who are,

*Your Honour's obliged and endeared friends,
brethren, and Servants in the Lord,*

Subscribed in our name, and by our direction, by the clerk of our General Meeting,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

From

From the contending, wrestling, suffering and distressed, reformed church of Scotland, to the true Protestant and reformed church at Groningen, particularly the ministers thereof.

July 31st, 1684.

Right reverend and dearly Beloved,

THE sweet experience which we have had of your receiving, and faithfulness in weighing our former addresses, with the circumstances wherein we stand, hath given us abundant encouragement to catch hold of this present opportunity of the unfolding somewhat of our sorrows, which your love and our necessity invites and calls, yea commands us to represent to your sympathy and compassion; however, we are confident, we may commit much to the faithfulness of our right honourable Delegate, to lay open unto you our sad and deplorable condition. And we are assured that the love ye bear to the common cause of all Christians will not suffer you to shut your eyes from the bleeding and lamentable condition of the poor distressed church of Scotland. Should we not therefore seek to ease our burdened hearts, by pouring them out into your bosoms? for if we should neglect this, we would seem ungrateful towards you, who have given so large and ample evidences of your readiness to do for us, and suffer with us.

Assuredly, if ever a poor church was battered at by Satan and his instruments, we are that church; if ever a poor people were beset round with right and left hand opposites, we are that people: if ever a poor remnant were the objects of Antichrist's cruelty and apostatical malice, we are that remnant: For the Lord hath called forth and strengthened an enemy against us, *the rod of his anger, and the staff of his indignation*; a generation of men whose spirits are set on edge by the fury of hell, under whose exasperate cruelties we sigh and mourn, they drawing their furrows upon our backs. Many of us are daily led as lambs to the slaughter; yea, and at the hour of our death are not permitted to commend the free grace of God in Christ, to speak to the loveliness and desirableness of the cross, to exhort others to steadfastness in the cause, nor to proclaim that *the lines*
are

are fallen to us in pleasant places. Some are shut up in prison-houses, laid in irons, and so barbarously kept, that those whom they are most strictly related unto, either by the bonds of nature or Christianity, can have no access unto them. Others are sent away to foreign plantations to be sold as slaves; and all of us, we may say, put to wander with our lives in our hands, and to eat our bread in the peril of our lives, many of our residences being in the wild mountains, dens and caves of the earth, the enraged adversary still searching and pursuing after us, and many still permitted to fall into their hands. But O! we need not express unto you the inveterate and deadly malice of this malignant, profane, and antichristian faction; for what true Protestants know it not, that the rage of stated enemies against the church of Christ is insatiable. However, the Lord is our witness, that our grief and trouble is not so much because of the dangers we are in, and of the misery which we are liable to; but that which most affects our hearts, is the danger which we behold the whole Protestant reformed churches are in at this juncture, through the universal conspiracies and combinations amongst avowed enemies to religion, their strength, by appearance, still increasing. If our God will lay our bodies as the street under our feet, and pour out our blood as dust before their fury, his holy and wise will be done: For, if our blood would be a mean to recover or preserve the rest of the true churches of Christ from antichristian tyranny, we are willing to offer it up for the service: But we know their fury is insatiable, and will not die with us; they being armed against us, not as men, but as Christians. Yet what shall we say, we dare not quarrel nor repine at our low case, but we ought rather to rejoice in it, seeing that it makes for the manifestation of the Lord's attributes toward us; for we may say, he gets new occasion to make his power manifest, taking hold of our extremity as his opportunity; so that we may say, we are troubled on every side, yet not destroyed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. For we are not made so much to mourn because of the length that enemies are permitted to proceed against us, as to wonder that they get not more of their purposes accomplished, for day and night they weary themselves in pursuing after the guiltless. Many times we are delivered

ed out of their hands as a prey plucked out of their teeth, and this we esteem much, not as it is our deliverance, but as it manifests the Lord's power and faithfulness towards us, and encourages us to believe that he shall do great things for us: Wherefore our mouths shall be filled with laughter, our tongue with singing, and we shall be made to proclaim among the heathen, *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad*: Yea, we are always delivered, for we account it a blessed and happy deliverance, that (though some faint, yet) many are kept faithful unto the death, choosing rather to quit with their heads than any of the precious truths of Christ, they singing in the hot furnace, and crying out, that *their lines are fallen to them in pleasant places*.

Now, Right reverend and dearly beloved in our Lord, we have the more encouragement to lay out our case every way unto you, that your brotherly sympathy and labours of love have been manifest to us all, and throughout the world, by your kindly acceptance of our right honourable and faithful Delegate's informations, your respecting and crediting him whom we owe so much respect and credit unto; by your affectionate kindness unto and ordaining of Mr. *James Renwick*, who is to us a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, which hath furnished us with no small encouragement and refreshment in this day of our distress; the Lord giving evidences that he is his messenger; and also, by your hitherto friendly entertaining of such as have been sent to your colleges: Withal, earnestly, though humbly, begging and intreating, that (if there be any possibility of it) ye would condescend upon some way for the future maintaining of some of our youths at your colleges; for we may say, as we are not able to maintain them abroad, so our schools and colleges at home are so corrupt and ensnaring, that none who will not run with them into the same excess of error and riot, can or dare meddle with the same. However, we seriously desire that none from this land be owned or acknowledged by you, who have not our reffication or the recommendation of our Delegate. And as to these, who without our knowledge or counsel have already crept in amongst you with their errors and calumnies, tending to the weakning of the Protestant interest; we hope we need not again warn you, judging that snare to be already broken. So, in a deeper sense of our case, and with greater confidence of your sympathy

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pathy (having had proofs of the same) than we can express, we make this humble address unto you, in the bowels of Christ, earnestly imploring your most fervent prayers for us to the Lord, who is the hearer of prayer, that he who hides his face from us, may yet return again and lift up the light of his countenance upon us, may reclaim his captivated declarative glory, and subdue and scatter the enemies thereof.

Now, the Lord prosper you, and preserve us, that we may all, as one man, stand up against Antichrist and all his limbs, and whatever is contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness, that so the work of these latter ages may be carried on, to the honour of God and the Church's joy, through Jesus Christ:—So, we remain,

Your obliged friends, and humble Servants in the Lord,

Subscribed in our name, and by our direction, by the Clerk of our General Meeting,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

The contending and wrestling, suffering and distressed reformed church of Scotland, to the true reformed church at Embden.

July 31st, 1684.

Right revd. and dearly beloved in the Lord,

OUR long delaying to testify our acknowledgment of your kindly sympathy and friendly commiseration of us in our distressed, bleeding and perplexed case, may make you apprehend that we are forgetful of the great benefits which we received from your hands, and ungrateful towards yourselves: but we earnestly intreat that no such thought may be entertained; for though our transmission of letters to you, hath hitherto, by reason of some providential exigences, been obstructed, yet the sense of the duty of thankfulness which we owe unto you is, and we hope will be, always upon our spirits. Albeit we be in such a poor case as we are not able, tho' most willing, to manifest the same by remunerating you
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any manner of way, according to your kindness shown, and liberality extended towards us; but we know in what ye did, therein ye had your eye upon duty, and not upon reward. And your charitable frame of spirit which was evidenced to us by your bounty, and declared by our right honourable Commissioner, was more encouraging and refreshing to us than all worldly things could be; for we look upon the founding of bowels among Christians as a great token of good to the universal church, which (as we a poor part thereof are in a deplorable case) is in a very dangerous condition; the rage of enemies being insatiable, not bended against us as men, but as Christians, yea as Protestants; and the more they prevail against us, the more courage they take to enter into universal plots and conspiracies against the whole reformed churches. Therefore let us account the suffering of one member as intended against all; and so let us take heed to ourselves and to our common gospel interest; for the plots of Satan and his instruments are no more deep than universal. Let it be our study to be led in the way of truth and holiness, which is the way of pleasantness, and to stand up as one man against Antichrist, and whatever men of antichristian and malignant spirits would intrude upon the kingdom of our Lord. Let us beware of affronting our noble Captain by yielding to his enemies one foot of ground, for the cause is his, and it is worth the contending for. It is so honourable and precious that nothing is too costly to bestow upon it. And if the Lord were not letting us see that this cause which we are contending and suffering for, is his own cause, and the heads of our sufferings are his crown and the pendicles of it: were it not so, we would soon yield and give it over: for these men who are the rod of the Lord's anger against us have their spirits set on edge by the fire of hell: their fury is so fiery, their rage so cruel, and their snares so subtle, that our case hath none so like it, as was the condition of the godly in the Netherlands, in the time of the Spanish inquisition. But we cannot get time to look upon our miseries and dangers, being forced to turn our contemplation another way, to wit, to behold the wonderful works of the Lord in his doing for us in this our low condition, by stirring up the spirits of you and of some others to sympathize with us, by bearing up our spirits under this fiery trial, you drawing out his breasts of consolation,

in such a measure amongst us that are burden-bearers in the heat of this our day, that many are made to cry out, Their work is easy, *their lines are fallen to them in pleasant places*; and by wonderfully delivering us out of the claws of this roaring adversary, and plucking us as a prey out of their teeth, when sense, reason and probability said the contrary; so that from his power and faithfulness, meeting with many inexpressible proofs of the same, we desire to believe, that because of the glory of his great name he will do great things for us, yea work wonders; for indeed no less can raise up his born-down, yea ruined work in Scotland. But though the church's disease at this time be deplorable, yet we dare not look upon it as incurable, seeing Jesus Christ the faithful physician (who meddles only with desperate diseases, that his skillfulness may the more appear) is engaged to look upon it, and to help it. He *will heal her backslidings and will love her freely*; and *will turn away his anger from her, yea, and will be as the dew unto her, so that she shall grow as the lily, and cast forth her roots as Lebanon. Her branches shall spread, her beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and her smell as Lebanon.* We desire to wait for that longed-for day, and for the time when judgment shall return again to righteousness, and when men shall discern between the righteous and the wicked.

So, right reverend, much honoured and dearly beloved, make many errands to the throne of grace for us, praying earnestly and frequently that the Lord who is the great master-builder of his own work, may work, and accomplish his work amongst us, and perfect the same over the belly of all opposition; and that we may be strengthened with patience to endure to the end, standing out resolutely against our outward and inward enemies, and no-ways staining the honour of the glorious Captain of our salvation.

Now, the Lord God of hosts be with you, and fortify your spirits against all the machinations of Satan, making you all good soldiers, clothed with his armour of proof, that ye may endure to the end, and enjoy the crown which he hath laid up for all that fear him. We shall detain you no further at the time, humbly desiring (if possible) to be dignified with a line from your hands, which shall be most refreshing and reviving unto

*Your most obliged and endeared friends, and
obedient servants in all Christian duty.*

Subscribed in our name, and by our direction, by the Clerk of the General Meeting.

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

THE next General meeting was October 15th, 1684. The state of the country in general, and of the societies in particular, at that time being pretty largely described by Mr. *Alexander Shields*, in his account of the life of Mr. *James Renwick*, from page 47, to 69. The reader must be referred thereto. Only a short hint shall be here given.

September 20th, a most viperous proclamation, with letters of inter-communing was issued out against Mr. *Renwick*, &c. commanding, and commissionating all subjects, not to harbour nor supply with meat, drink, &c. the wanderers, but to hunt and pursue them out of all their dens, caves, and most retired desarts, and to raise the HUE, and CRY after them; and not to reset, or correspond with them, under the pain of being esteemed art and part with them, and to be prosecuted accordingly.

With this wicked mandate many complied, so that the poor persecuted wanderers were reduced to incredible straits, many were taken and murdered, imprisoned, and reduced to great hardships of hunger and cold; occasioned especially by the indefatigable vigilance of some *vagabond villains*, who were suborned, and encouraged to give information, and intelligence of them, wherever they saw, or heard they were seen: Thus they being in such a *pinch of perplexity*, having neither ability to fight, nor possibility to flee, nor probability to hide themselves, nor means of sustentation to preserve themselves alive, by hiding: They were forced to fall upon the only expedient they could think upon, in order to evite their ineluctable ruin, which was to warn intelligencers, and bloody *Doegs*, of the wickedness of their way, and to threaten them, (in case of persisting in malicious shedding of their blood, or instigating thereto, and assisting therein) that they would not be so slack handed in time coming to revenge it; that thus threatening, and warning them of their hazard, they might deter intelligencers, and murders from such a practice; and to vindicate themselves from false aspersions, of murdering principles

ciples cast upon them by the Counsel, the indulged and their abettors; by an ingenious apologetick representation of their sentiments, and resolutions in these things, shewing how after the example of our reformers, contending with bloody tyrants, in former times, how far they were necessitate to contend, and reduce to practice, in their present circumstances, that privilege of extraordinary executing of judgment on murdering beasts of prey. See the above quoted book.

Wherefore, at the General Meeting October 15th, 1684, they concluded upon the Apologetick Declaration, (which is printed with the Informatory Vindication) which although it made some of the intelligencers, stand in fear to follow that way so avowedly; yet it was made the greatest handle of by the persecutors, and of reproach by the ministers and others, of any thing they had ever done; for shortly after the persecutors framed an oath abjuring the said Declaration, which oath of abjuration, was universally pressed in such an arbitrary manner as was never heard of before, in these words. *I do abjure, renounce and disown a late Declaration, &c.* This oath being pressed on both men and women, and such as refused it imprisoned, and not a few of them execute on that head, although alas! many, yea very many complied, being instigate thereto, by the counsel, and example of such as were called suffering Presbyterian ministers.—Notwithstanding Mr. Alexander Shields, hath shown the sinfulness of this oath in Hind let Loose, Part 3d, Head 3d. and in Mr. Renwick's Life, Page 58, &c. Yet it is hoped the insertion of a letter of Mr. James Renwick's upon that subject, will be acceptable to the reader.

A Letter by MR. JAMES RENWICK, concerning the
OATH of ABJURATION, to some Friends.

Loving Friends,

ACCORDING to your desire, and my promise, I shall write to you my thoughts (in weakness) of this fair faced, though foul hearted, Oath, so violently pressed upon the consciences of young and old, lad and lass, by the wicked powers of the land, whereby many souls are caught in the snare, and fallen in the pit digged by them, not considering, or else not willing to see
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the hook under so fair a bait, nor the poison in the cup, although all their dainties be deceitful meat. And as this, upon the one hand ought to be matter of deep sorrow, and mournful lamentation before the Lord, to all seriously concerned, and tender of the Lord's work and cause, against the wrongs and injuries done unto him, and that there should be so many (and that in a covenanted land) wearying of his sweet and easy yoke, as if he had been a barren wilderness, and a land of drought to them, who have now left his colours, and fled from his camp, and run unto Satan's (that great red dragon, fighting against Michael and his angels) and listed themselves under his banner, taking on his livery, and wreathing his yoke about their necks: O foolish people and unwise, have they thus requited the Lord? But as that yoke is a beggarly bondage, and an enslaving thralldom, so their wages (if free mercy prevent not) shall be well paid them; even to *drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation*, Rev. xiv. 10.

So upon the other hand, we have this as a ground of encouragement, and matter of praise before the Lord, that notwithstanding so many are *rushing, as the horse into the battle*, into enemies camps, and receiving their mark in their right hand, or forehead, that yet there are many in this land whom the Lord has helped, and honoured by his grace, to follow him, walking in his way, and hath kept them at a distance from the pollutions and abominations of the times; and out these destructive paths *yea to resist unto blood striving against sin*. And I am hopeful he will keep a Remnant, whom neither the wind of temptation shall blow away, nor the flame of persecution burn, nor the fire of judgment consume; *But they shall be a holy seed, to do service to him, as a teil tree, or oak, whose substance is in them*, when the carcases of thousands shall dung the wilderness.

Having premised this, I shall next unbosom my thoughts of the sinfulness of the Oath (of Abjuration) by producing some reasons against the Oath itself, earnestly desiring any who shall be at the pains to look on this line, to read it seriously, singly, and impartially, weighing the same in the balance of the sanctuary.

And

1st, There can no oath be taken rightly, except the person taking it, swear in truth, in judgment and in righte-

righteousness. But, O how can any think to take it, when the designs thereof (as shall be shown) are so evidently destructive to the interest of religion, that is now lying at the stake; and also, the persons imposing it, are avowed enemies to God, and all righteousness: And are so lawfully and justly disowned, as having no right to govern for their perjury and murder, for their usurpation in things ecclesiastic, and tyranny in things civil.

2dly, All who answer the enemies demand in taking this oath, are guilty of complying with their hellish and wicked designs to root out, and raze to the foundation the Protestant Interest (which, alas, is brought low by them already) that they may set up in its place their superstitious idolatry, and build their cursed Babel; for to effectuate this, they fall upon this design, to have the hands, heads, and hearts of all tied up from doing any thing for the preservation of religion: Is not this evident from that oath, wherein they swear, not to have war against, but peace with these whose designs are such? O dreadful and monstrous wickedness, to be guilty of rooting out the work of God, and laying the foundation of that cursed Babel again:

3dly, All the takers of this wretched oath, cannot free themselves of being guilty of condemning all that our fore-fathers have done in the defence and preservation of our glorious work of Reformation, and in defence of themselves, against Papists, Prelates, and Malignants.

4thly, All the takers of this oath swear never to make war with these who are following their footsteps, yea, and worse than these who went before them; yea, the taking thereof says, that the enemies opposition has been right, and the Lord's people wrong, and acted as fools, and suffered as such; which were blasphemy to assert: For the import and design of that declaration, abjured by the oath, is nothing but to carry on and advance that glorious work of Reformation, and to defend themselves against all opposers, (which nature allows) seeing their enemies had declared war against them, and their declaring war, was but a repelling of violence. O wicked sin, to be guilty of condemning and burying of such a glorious work.

5thly, All who take this oath, swear unto a lie, for it says that the declaration is for killing all who serve his Majesty in church, state, army, or country; whereas it makes a plain distinction obvious to all, between the
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more moderate, and the cruel and blood-thirsty, and to make the degree of punishment, according to the degree of their offence. And doth not the taking of God (who is truth itself) to witness to such a lie, make the sin greatly heinous, and may not such expect that their bands will be made strong?

6thly, The swearers of this oath make themselves guilty of that blasphemous supremacy, established by their law, in the person of a dying wretched mortal, over all persons, and in all causes, which properly belongs to Christ, as being head in and over his own church: And this they have twined into the oath, in these words, "all who serve his Majesty, in Church and State." And so by this oath, the Prelates, Curates, and other officers of their church are said (not to serve or be subject to Christ) but to him, and he to be their head and fountain, from whence they derive their power, so these who take this oath, may expect to meet with that same measure of wrath, if repentance prevent it not, with these who are actually guilty of robbing Christ of his royal prerogatives, when he arises as an incensed Mediator to reclaim his own rights and declarative glory, thus usurped and trode upon by the wicked.

7thly, By taking of this oath, they become guilty of perjury: A wicked and epidemick sin; for in our Solemn League and Covenant, we are bound to the utmost of our power, to extirpate popery, prelacy, and malignancy, &c. Now, how can any fulfil their engagements to God, when they swear not to have war, yea not so much as move their tongue (which they will interpret to be a declaring war) against the chief ringleaders, and promoters of popery and prelacy. And O can any free this of perjury? Shall they break the covenant and be delivered? No, the Lord who is a swift witness against all false swearers, will punish such.

8thly, By taking this oath they swear to have peace with the enemies of God, these *Amalekites* against whom he will have war, from generation to generation; and we are commanded in Deut. xxiii. 6. not to seek their peace nor prosperity all our days for ever. And is not this swearing not to have war against his enemies, a clear breach of that command given by God to his people? And likewise in our baptismal vows, we are given away to the Lord, to fight under his banner, against the devil, the world, and the flesh. O let us not break our vows

in making peace with any of them, lest we provoke him to let us fall as a prey before them, and them to have dominion over us; and ought not this to make a tender hearted Christian scar at it, because they have made it a discriminating sign, and token, between the good and the bad, to know who are on their side, and who not; and that none are to buy, or sell, without they have the mark of the beast, (the pass shewing they have taken the oath of peace) in their right hand, or fore-head.

9thly, The swearing of it is a wronging of justice, seeing by this oath they are not to have war with any that serve his Majesty, in church, state, army, or country, whereas many of them by their open and avowed murder, perjury, blasphemy, and idolatry, have forfeited their lives, and made themselves liable to the stroke and sword of justice; for the land that is defiled with blood, cannot be cleansed, but by the blood of him who shed it. Numb. xxxv. 31, 32, 33.

10thly, These who take this wretched oath of peace will not be exempted from the next trial that cometh through; for although they have gone on in the whole steps of defection formerly, yet if they answer not the present demand of the enemies, all that they have done before, will be to no purpose; yea what may be expected next, but that the Whore of Rome spread her mantle of darkness over these covenanted lands. O happy soul, in that day, who shall be found near God, and far from the tents of these wicked men; for it is to be feared that these who have gone on in the former steps of defection, will make but a step of this also, seeing (it hath been observed) that defection in this day, hath grown by degrees, and gone on by little and little, till they have been one with open enemies. Not desiring to trouble you further, I remain,

Yours at command in the Lord Jesus.

Sic Subscribitur, JAMES RENWICK.

THE troubles and trials betwixt the last meeting and this, were very many and lamentable. The malice, the despite, the rage, the tyranny and cruelty of the enemies were come to a great height, and much of the same was exercised against the Societies, and such as befriended them. The apologetic Declaration, spoken of before, being

being affixt on many church doors, it made a great noise thro' the whole land. Upon the one hand, it did much deter these intelligencers (concerning whom it was especially emitted) from that wicked work they were formerly employed in. And it (with something that fell out at that time) * did not a little damp and fright many malignants in the West, and elsewhere, especially such who had been active in the persecution of the wanderers; particularly many of the Curates, were so terrified, that in some places, as in Galloway and Nithsdale, scarce one of them durst stay, but went into Fdinburgh and other towns: And upon the other hand, the Counsel issued out a proclamation, commanding the taking of an oath abjuring the foresaid Declaration, which thereafter, was vigorously and rigorously imposed.—The distresses, the calamities, and afflictions of the Societies, were many, and of various kinds, soldiers were impowered to kill any of them, wherever they could be found with arms, (which they were necessitate to have, for their own, and their brethren's defence) accordingly some of them were killed in cold blood in the open fields, some were dragged to prisons, others were murdered on scaffolds. And the tossings, wanderings, and hardships the rest were redacted to, were very great.

IN this sad time a General Meeting conveyed at *Auchengiloch*, upon the 8th day of January, 1685. After prayer, and modelling of the meeting, they approved of what was concluded at the last meeting which met at _____ the 15th of October, 1684.

A form of a Commission, being presented to, and read at this meeting, was agreed to; and it was resolved, that all these who were to be sent from Societies, to following General Meetings, should have the said form of Commission; without which, they were not to be admitted. Which paper being drawn up, and condescended unto, was much for orders sake afterward made use of, for Societies getting copies of it: these whom they sent to General Meetings, had it ordinarily with them, wherein their name was insert, and also the Society they came from, some of them subscribing it, in name of the rest, which was delivered to the person who received

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* This seems to be that which is related by Mr. Renwick in one of his Letters concerning Major Winram's children, see page 81 of Renwick's Letters.

the whole of these commissions, at every General Meeting, (*viz.* Mr. Shields). This method was observed, that it might be known that these who came there, were all sent from the United Societies, and from what society in particular, every one came: As also, to have some knowledge of the persons themselves that were sent. The tenor of which paper follows.

WE the Society of ——— do hereby commissionate the bearer ———, (being one of our number, and of one judgment and persuasion with ourselves, and not chargeable with any public scandal) to this present General Meeting of the Commissioners of our United Societies, giving him full power, unanimous and free consent, and assent, to vote, and in our name to agree unto every thing that may be concluded by them, according to the word of God, our covenants, and reformation, our former and later honest contendings, faithful declarations, protestations and sufferings, and the conclusions of our foregoing General Meetings. Withal, faithfully to oppose himself to whatever may be contrary to the foresaids.

Given the ——— day of ———. Subscribed in our name, and by our direction, by a member of our Society.

A person came to this meeting from a Society in *Newcastle, in Northumberland*, who corresponded with the United Societies; and gave some account of their present case, and of one particular, which they desired the meeting's advice in, how they should carry in it: which was this, some of their number having been prisoners, their relations had procured their liberty, without their knowledge, by giving bond to present them again.

Now it became puzzling to them, to know what to do in this matter; whether to enter again to prison, according to the said bond, or to absent themselves, by which it would be forfeit: Therefore they desired this meeting's advice anent it. Who after deliberation, concluded upon writing a letter, in which is their advice in that particular. Of which letter the tenor followeth.

To some Friends in Newcastle.

Jan. 8th, 1685.

Dearlly beloved Brethren in the Lord,

WE have heard from *John Scot*, whom we conceive to have had commission from you for that same effect, the difficulty and trials in your present case, which are in no small measure affecting to us. But, O! be not discouraged, but rather rejoice, that the Lord will not give unto you ease, which is very undesirable now when *Zion* is in trouble; neither think your fiery trials strange, for it is but the same in measure with what happens unto your brethren: And though no affliction for the present be joyous but grievous to flesh and blood, yet we cannot but look upon the greatest tribulation, when the work of God is so low, to be the greater testimony of his love.

However, as to our mind and advice anent your present strait, we judge it,

1st, Matter of great concernedness, both to you and us, that some of you should be redacted to that intricate extremity, that your sin and suffering is upon the one hand, and the suffering of our nearest and dearest relations upon the other, which we know assuredly, will be more bitter to you than any thing that can be brought upon yourselves in following your duty. But,

2^{dly}, Ye, as we hope, not having consented actively or passively, by silence or concurrence, to your relations their purchasing your liberty, by a bond to present you again before the sessions; we judge it cannot be your duty to be either active or passive in presenting yourselves, but that ye ought to make out of the way, seeing ye know assuredly ye will be apprehended. (1.) It would infer your consenting to what your relations have done, in tampering with the adversary. (2.) It would infer your having a hand in your latter sufferings, which surely is both a sin in the sight of God, and very disquieting to the conscience; for though we ought chearfully to embrace suffering when the Lord sends it in our way, yet we ought first to have no hand in it ourselves, no not by omitting our duty in using what lawful means may prevent the same: When we are *persecuted in one city*, we are commanded to *fly to another*. Let all of you that
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are at liberty use all means to keep yourselves so ; for if you shall cast yourselves into the trial, ye know not what snares the Lord may subject you unto, as your punishments, whereof ye may be made to repent out of time.

But, dear brethren, let not your present trials damp or confuse you, for if the Lord had not seen such a case for his glory and your good, he had not brought you unto it. Seek not the carving out of your own lot, but put it in the Lord's hand, and subscribe your consent unto what he sees meet to do unto you ; study to walk before him in the way of duty, in paths approved by him and well-pleasing to him ; and there, and there only, ye shall enjoy the comfortable light of his pleasant countenance, wherewith he beholdeth the upright : seek the upmaking of all your wants in himself, who hath promised to take you up, *though father and mother should both forsake you.*

Now, if ye incline thereunto, and see it fit to come into *Scotland*, and take part and lot with us, know assuredly, that ye shall be most acceptable ; and though we can promise you nothing but persecution, yet ye shall have our countenance, and all the encouragement that we can bestow upon you : and we hope that ye shall not think your lot hard. So, leaving you upon the Lord, for the light of direction and consolation, we remain,

Your affectionate brethren, sympathizing friends, and servants in the Lord,

Subscribed in our name, by our direction, and by the Clerk of our General Meeting,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

It was also concluded by the meeting that a letter should be written to the Laird of Earlstoun, then a prisoner. Which accordingly after the meeting was drawn up and sent. The occasion of this resolution was the hearing of a letter read, sent by him to Mr. James Renwick that contained some account of his case at the time, which was not a little refreshing and affecting to them.

From the suffering and wrestling Remnant of the church of Scotland, to the right honourable the Laird of Earlstoun, prisoner for the cause of Christ.

Jan. 8th, 1685.

Much honoured Sir,

YOUR letter, directed to the right reverend Mr. *James Renwick*, was very refreshing and encouraging to us all; yea, we may say, a little reviving to our spirits in our bondage, having not heard from yourself, nor particularly of your case, for a considerable time before, which, together with the many troubles we have been and are trysted with, hath occasioned our not writing unto you: and although you have not heard from us after this manner, yet you have not been forgotten by us. But we were and are desirous to know your case, and to keep up that due sympathy and fellow-feeling with you, in your bonds for precious Christ, which we ought. However, we desire to bless the Lord upon your account, who hath brought you for the manifesting the riches of his free grace, through so many and so various trials and temptations, from within and without, from malicious enemies and flattering pretended friends; yea, hath brought you again from the gates of death, and sides of the grave, gaping ready to devour you, thereby disappointing the fears of his people, and expectations of his enemies, which you ought to look upon as testimonies of his love and fatherly chastisements, that before you be unpurged and turn dross in the furnace, he will take great pains upon you, and take you from one fire to another, till ye be a vessel fitted for his service; and when enemies think to add sorrow to your affliction, in making you like an howl in the desert, or a pelican in the wilderness, by shutting you up in close prison, far from the converse of your friends and relations; that then and there he should visit you with his loving kindness, and fill your soul with a sense of his love, and make you sing in the midst of these hot fires, (O wonderful love, and matchless condescendency!) and to say that heart-ravishing and soul-comforting word, mentioned in your letter, *My Lord*; and not only so, but to give you such a lively and savoury impression upon your spirit of his public work, and noble cause in
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this day, when it is worn off the spirits of many, who seemingly had it once; and, alas! too much off many of our own. All which, we say, as it is ground of encouragement, and matter of praise to us before the Lord; so you ought, in a special manner, to praise and magnify him for the same, and to make the experiences of his former loving kindness to your soul, as motives to believe, and helps to confide in him for the future; that he, who hath brought you thro' the depths before, remains faithful and cannot change, can and will bring you thro' the like again; yea, tho' he should see it fit in his holy wisdom to make you wade thro' waters deep and broad, and to make you go thro' fires more large and hot; yet, O faint not, trust in him who hath done so great things to you and for you: Remember Christ, your Head and Captain, is above the waters; he waded thro' deeper waters, and ran through hotter fires, (and all for the redemption of poor lost sinners) than you or any of his people can do: Remember him, *who endured such contradiction of sinners, and for sinners; who being tempted, knows how to succour these that are so.* Labour to put a blank in his hand, that you may not quarrel with him, whatever let he may tryst you with. O his presence will make any let desirable, for it supplies all wants, and makes the creature to rejoice, when robbed and spoiled of all other things; it makes afflictions light, and trials easy; it makes a prison a palace, and the threatenings of men to be despised; yea, it will make the soul sing and rejoice, when *going through the valley and shadow of death.*

Much honoured Sir, what shall we say more for your encouragement but this, Go on, go on, in your suffering for precious Christ; the cause you are suffering for is Christ's own cause, and he will own it in his own due time, and own all who own it sincerely: He lives and reigns, and will reign; *The crown shall flourish on his head, and all his enemies be clothed with shame.* And although enemies in this land will not have Christ to reign over them, having robbed him of his crown and royal prerogatives; and sense and reason would say, he would never reign in this land, yet faith, which sees clearly in the darkest night, will see him sitting in his throne, reigning and ruling in and amongst his people, and over his enemies; coming clothed with the garments of vengeance, and cloak of zeal against them, and with the garments

ments of salvation and mercy to his people. O happy souls that will be found in his way, and about their work when he comes, to whom his coming will only be sweet. What shall we say more to his commendation? He is good, and does good, his cross is easy, and his burden is light. He hath done and is doing great things for us; he hath been and is at great pains with us to purge us from our dross, and make us a holy and cleanly people to himself. He hath given us the gospel, and it seems he is countenancing the same, and increasing the followers thereof. And O! he seems to be about to do some great work in this land, *to bring to pass his act, his strange act.*

Much honoured Sir, You make mention in your letter, of your resolution to write at more length to us, when an opportunity offers. That opportunity is longed for by us; for your last was so refreshful, that we earnestly desire to hear from you again.

So, leaving you upon the God of Jacob for his direction, assistance, and consolation in time, and the enjoyment of himself throughout eternity: begging that while in the body, you will not be unmindful of us, who are not forgetful of you. We are,

*Your Honour's assured and sympathizing Friends,
brethren and servants in the Lord,*

Subscribed in our name, and by our direction, by the clerk of our General Meeting,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

This General Meeting being for not joining in family exercise with scandalous persons, especially those who were grossly scandalous, by their compliance with the abominations of the time, desired that any of our Societies who had reasons for it, or scruples anent it, should bring them to the next General Meeting, to the end they might be considered and answered, for their further information. That which gave the rise to this, was, that some who had occasion sometimes to join in family worship with such persons as is above mentioned, and having scruples anent the same, did therefore propose it to this meeting, that they might get their advice

how to carry therein. But I do not remember that any thing more concerning this was done at any of our General Meetings after this, or yet before it.

It was further appointed by the meeting, that the 27th of July be observed by all our societies as a day of prayer, fasting, mourning and humiliation before the Lord, because of our sad and sinful neglect of solemn setting time apart for acknowledging of God, seeking his counsel and countenance with what we so solemnly went about, being sensible that the Lord hath been angry at us thereanent.

And it was appointed that the next meeting should convene at *Auchengilloch*, upon the 12th of *February*, 1685.

AFTER the last Meeting, (as also a little before it) the troubles and trials of the country were exceeding great, by the violent pressing of the oath of Abjuration, which in some places was imposed upon young and old, lad and lass, wherewith many complied; yet afterwards not a few of those who took it, did see the wickedness thereof, and publicly acknowledged the same, and severals of them joined with the wanderers. But when the pressing of the said oath was going most vigorously through the country, unexpectedly a stop was put thereto by the death of *Charles II.* at *Whitehall*, *February* —, not without suspicion of being poisoned by his brother the Duke of York, whose ambition to ascend the throne was great.

This put a stop to the general pressing of the foresaid oath, yet the condition of the societies was very lamentable, persecution went on most vigorously; the rage, malice and cruelty of enemies was in a peculiar manner manifested against them. Some of whom, coming to this meeting were discovered, and notice sent to the enemy. About two compaines of foot, commanded by one *Euchan*, marched out of *Glasgow*, to search after them, who (with some horsemen, among whom was the laird of *Lee*) having found out these poor people *, pursued after

* See Mr. Renwick's 33d letter. It was reported that one mean of their preservation was, that *Gavin Wotherspoon*, who was with them, lost his shoe, which being found by the enemy, and seeing it very large, concluded that he must be a strong man whose foot filled it; therefore a few might not attack them.

ter them very vigorously the most part of a day. But though they all, (except one man, who after apprehending was immediately shot) escaped from these bloody men, yet they were thereby hindered from going to the meeting.

HOWEVER, some met at the place and time appointed, viz. February 12th, near *Auchengilloch*, who agreed upon two days to be observed by the societies.

1st, It was concluded that the 4th of *March* should be kept a day of thanksgiving unto the Lord for the wonderful proofs of his love and goodwill, manifested to a scattered and distressed remnant in this land, by his delivering of them in several places, from the power and rage of enemies, when they were ready to swallow them up.

2^{dly}, It was appointed that the 8th of *April* should be set apart as a day of fasting, mourning and humiliation before the Lord, for the unwarrantable out-breakings that have been committed by some, in several places, contrary to our Covenant-engagements and Declarations.

3^{dly}, It was appointed that the next general meeting shall convene at —, the first Wednesday of *May*.

As the trials, troubles, snares and tentations of the country were many, and of various kinds, before the death of Charles II, that profane person; so after the same, and his brother James Duke of York, a profest Papist, having usurped the throne, they were nothing diminished, but in some respects sadder and greater. And in particular the persecution against the societies came to its greatest height; many of whom were cruelly and inhumanely murdered in the open fields, and others hanged, many dragged to prisons, some tortured by fire-matches and thumbkins, and others laid in irons; and their diligence in searching and pursuing after them was great; whereby they were reduced to many distresses, and weary wanderings, and forced to seek shelter in the wildest wildernesses and desarts. In a word, such was the enraged cruelty and furious hellish zeal of these bloody adversaries against these poor people, whom they designed wholly to cut off, that they spared neither the young man for his youth, nor the old man for his grey hairs and stooping age; yea, women, and that both old

and young escaped not their bloody and barbarous hands, by whom some were strangely murdered, and many of them carried to prison. But notwithstanding of all this, and much more than can, or is suitable to be related here, several joined with these wanderers, chusing to take one lot with them, though as to the outward it was very hard; and their zeal and courage was nothing abated, but rather increased. For though adversaries were cruel, and their malice insatiable, yet the Lord was gracious and kind, helping them to suffer chearfully, and to wander pleasantly. In these days of distress and tribulation, the enjoyment (sometimes) of the gospel was very encouraging to them, although they got it with the hazard of their life, and were still in danger to have their blood mingled with their sacrifice. And though they had many against them, yet they wanted not some friends; for not a few up and down the country, were very kind, giving them entertainment and rest, (which was very helpful unto them in their desolate and wandering condition) notwithstanding that there were strict commands to the contrary, and the same was oftentimes attended with sufferings. Among other means made use of at this time by the enemies to accomplish their wicked designs, the sending for many of the savage and wild Highlanders was one, who coming to the west, were very cruel and vigorous in robbing and spoiling and hunting of poor people, some of whom fell into their hands and were barbarously murdered. And by them (especially) and others ranging up and down the country, severals were hindered from coming to this Meeting.

BUT some few having met at ———, upon the 6th of *May* 1685. They condescended upon another meeting to convene at *Blackgannoch*, on *May* 28th.

THE case of the land continued still sad and deplorable. Enemies were still hunting these poor people in towns, villages, mountains, woods and deserts, or wherever they heard any of them were seen; whereby many fell into their hands, some of whom they presently sacrificed to satisfy their cruel lust, others they carried to prisons, where they lay languishing in great distress.

But although what they suffered was very pinching, and hard to flesh and blood, and the remembrance there-
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of be now sad; yet it was, and is ground of comfort, and matter of praise, that the Lord helped them (albeit much despised and reproached) to contend and suffer for truth, and honoured many of them to die martyrs for his cause, wherein they were countenanced of him, and helped to suffer chearfully to the admiration of on-lookers, and the conviction of enemies themselves.

About the time that the meeting mentioned above should have convened, it was noised abroad that an invasion was to be in this land, under the conduct of the *Earl of Argyle*; who with several others had laid down resolutions abroad to put a stop to the present wicked course that was carrying on. This made enemies prepare to oppose them, by raising of the militia, heritors, and many of the savage Highlanders came south, whereby in the mean time the wanderers were reduced to several straits, and much of the fury of these forces was turned against them.

About this time there was a parliament sitting at *Edinburgh*, to which *Queensbery* was commissioner. By whom there were some acts framed, that for wickedness and strangeness scarce a parallel can be found; against which, yea the very constitution of this Parliament, and the proclaiming of the Duke of York King; as also the in-coming of Popish idolatry, which was then apparent, it was thought duty to witness and protest against it, that it might be evident to succeeding generations, that such dreadful and monstrous wickedness past not without a testimony against the same; and that they might free themselves from partaking thereof.

WHEREUPON, a paper being written, was brought to this meeting, which convened at *Blackgannoch*, on *May 28th*, 1685. After prayer, and modelling of the meeting, what was done at the former meeting was approved by them.

Also, it was resolved by all and sundry the members of this meeting, not to join with malignants, or sectarians in arms.

This conclusion was made on account of some that were already concerned in the expeditions then on foot in both kingdoms, and more that were to be taken into that association; with these that were appearing in this land it was desired that the societies should join, and they expected to be more solicited for that end: wherefore

fore it was judged fit to speak of, and deliberate about it at this meeting, whereby they might know one another's minds anent associating with malignants and sectarians. But though they (desiring to adhere to the principles of this church concerning sinful association) had not freedom to join with such, nor could they espouse *Argyle's* declaration as the state of their quarrel, because it was not concerted according to the ancient plea of the Scotch Covenanters, &c.; and because it opened a door for a sinful confederacy; yet they were willing to do what lay in their power against the common enemy.

The meeting likewise agreed unto a protestation against proclaiming *James, Duke of York*, King of Scotland, &c. the lawfulness of the present pretended Parliament, and the apparent inlet of Popery, &c.: And it was resolved that it should be published the same day at the burgh of *Sanquhar*.

According to this conclusion, immediately after the meeting was ended, about 220 men drew up in arms, who went to the said burgh, and at the market cross, after singing a psalm, and *Mr. James Renwick* having prayed, the said Protestation was published, and a copy left on the cross; and thereafter the men marched out of the town. But in regard the said paper is in print, and hath been much seen, I shall not insert it here.

And it was appointed that the 4th of *June* should be kept by the societies a day of fasting and prayer unto the Lord, that he would direct and guide them in what they ought to do in the then expected exigence.

And it was appointed that the next meeting should meet at —, upon the 12th of *June*. The end of appointing this meeting was to deliberate upon what would be the duty of the societies, and how to go about it in that juncture when the expedition of *Argyle* and those with him was going on, for though they were not clear to join in that association, nor to embody themselves with that party, yet they were not for discouraging of them, but were ready and willing to act against the common enemy, so far as they were able and had opportunity. And the setting of that meeting so soon, was the expectation of that party (who were then in the Highlands) their coming south about that time, whereby they would know better when, and how to move and act. But
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in regard few came to the place appointed, being stoppt by reason of the Highlanders and others ranging up and down the country, so nothing was concluded concerning that affair for which it was chiefly appointed; and a little after that party was broken †, and it was laid aside.

After the publishing the foresaid declaration at Sanguhar, the enemies, but especially Claverhouse, that wicked and furious zealot, was very outrageous and active; for he with armed men searched for them through mosses and muirs, and the remotest places where it was known these people frequented; who were glad many times not only to seek shelter there, but also beneath the ground, in dens and caves, when they could get none above it.

About this time there were great commotions, (as aforesaid) the Highlanders, heritors, militia and forces, riding and running up and down the country.—The defeat of Argyle's party occasioned no small joy among the enemies, and their cruelty to the Earl and several others being execute, some were tortured, others banished. In the mean time the wanderers were not forgot; the malice of enemies vented itself various ways against them, and their trials and afflictions were neither few nor small.

Amongst others that escaped of *Argyle's* party, there were two ministers, viz. Mr. George Barclay and Mr. Robert Langlands, who had come out of Holland with the Earl. With these some of the wanderers falling in, endeavoured (being acquaint in the country) to get them shelter from the enemy. By which there was occasion got of some conference with these ministers, concerning the differences that were between them and the United Societies. For though the Societies loved and revered them, yet as matters were then circumstantiate, and the Testimony stated, they had not freedom to join with them until some exceptions they had against them were removed. To get this done, and union obtained, there were conferences with them, particularly at two times before, as also, at this General Meeting, which convened at the *Knepps*; July 24th, 1685. To which the
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† See Mr. Renwick's 25th and 36th letters. the first is in answer to a letter from Mr. Hamilton, wherein he shews the subtilty of some, and the deceit of others of that party.

two foresaid ministers having come, there was some conference with them; and likewise a proposal made by the meeting to them, yet no union was attained, but debates and janglings, and the differences rather made more, than either lessened or removed; which was very lamentable to see, and now unpleasant to remember. These conferences (an account of which is afterward) took up most part of the time, so that this meeting did little more. However, before they parted,

They agreed that a Letter should be wrote to Mr. Robert Hamilton, shewing the receipt of some money sent by him to the societies, and also to signify the same to the persons who had given it, and that he, in their name, should render them thanks, and shew their acknowledgment thereof. Which Letter was drawn up, and sent.

Also, they agreed that the Societies should observe a day of fasting and prayer to the Lord. The particular day was not fixed upon, but it was left to the Societies to chuse what day they thought most convenient. However, the causes for which it was kept, were condescended on.

And the next General Meeting was appointed to be at *Blackgannoch*, upon the 1st of *October*.

IN the interval betwixt the last meeting and this, the cruelty and barbarity of the persecuting enemies against those who had been with Argyle, was great; as also, against the society people, by hanging, torturing, banishing, cutting the ears, and imprisoning such as they found, and vigorously searching after the rest. Though these things were sad, yet the societies wanted not weighty additions thereto; which were, the differences betwixt others and them, which occasioned debates among themselves.

By the conferences mentioned above, union was not attained with Mr. George Barclay and Mr. Robert Langlands, but the difference grew rather greater and the breach wider: some of the Societies, especially in Carrick and the shire of Galloway, joined with these ministers whom the rest had not clearness to hear, having several valid exceptions against them that were not removed. This afterwards occasioned debates and contention; and some of those who joined with these ministers,
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turned great opposers and traducers of their brethren.

ACCORDING to appointment, A General Meeting convened at *Blackgannoch*, on the first of *October*, 1685.

It was appointed that Mr. James Renwick, with Colin Alison and Michael Shields, should draw up a full and true relation of the conference with the two ministers (above-named) and present the same to the next meeting. This was thought necessary to be done, to prevent mistakes and misrepresentations of the said conference, &c. Accordingly the same was drawn up.

It was also appointed that Colin Alison shall be sent abroad to Mr. Robert Hamilton, with the foresaid relation of the conference, &c. and also to inform him a-
nent our present circumstances. Accordingly after this meeting Colin went abroad.

And it was agreed that the next meeting should convene at *Powbeth-burn*, upon the 21st of *October*. This meeting was appointed the sooner upon the account of the foresaid relation, that it might be done, and sent abroad.

ACCORDING to the foresaid appointment, A General Meeting convened at *Powbeth-burn*, upon the 21st of *October*, 1685.

The relation of the conferences with Mr. George Barclay and Mr. Robert Langlands being drawn up by way of a letter to Mr. Robert Hamilton, and brought to this meeting, the same was compleated, every particular therein asserted and proven by sufficient witnesses, and direction given by the meeting to subscribe it in their name †, which was accordingly done. The tenor whereof followeth :

Right Honourable Sir,

THE wisdom of God hath seen it fit to call this poor church in Scotland to travel at this time through
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† The need of this circumspection appeared afterwards, as Mr. Robert Langlands wrote an account of this conference, far different from, and in some things inconsistent with this, but he pretends not to prove his account to be true, but gives his own word for all : which being exact in his own hand write, might be here insert, were it not long, and discreditable to his memory.

the deeps, so that the faithful members, whether at home or abroad, have the most singular difficulties and damping discouragements to grapple with, whereof you have no small experience; as also, we need not be ignorant of either. Nevertheless as you have been most careful to send us from abroad all informations needful for us, we should be most ungrateful towards you, and not a little weaken your hands, if we should not be at some pains to give you an account of matters, and of our contendings. Wherefore we have jointly concluded to send this bearer unto you, with the full and particular relation of what past betwixt us and these two ministers, viz. Mr. George Barclay and Mr. Robert Langlands, that thereby you may the better know how to carry in it, and inform ament our present circumstances.

The occasion of our meeting together was on this manner: Some persons did meet with a company of our friends assembled together by providence, and informed them that it was Mr. Barclay's earnest desire to meet with us, and that he would spare no pains for that effect. In answer whereunto, the 22d day of July was appointed for meeting with him, and notice thereof carried to him and to Mr. Langlands. But when we came together, and desired to hear wherefore he had sought a meeting with us; he said that he had desired no such thing; and we shewed that our appointment was only to answer his desire, as it was reported to us by some then present: But then they began to put another face upon it, saying, that which he desired was to this effect, That Mr. George Barclay was not unwilling to meet with us. But passing this and other things falling out then not very material, whereof the bearer, for your further satisfaction can inform you, we come to the matter itself.

In the first place, the foresaid ministers offered to lay all debates aside, and go on in the public work. But to this we could not yield; saying, that was not the right way to heal the sore. After which, mention being made by some, of the information sent to Mr. Brackel (at the time of Mr. Renwick's ordination) against the suffering party. Whereupon a true transcript of Mr. Brackel's letter to your Honour was produced and read; the sum of the heads whereof were as follow:

That they had accused us, 1st, That we had not only cast all magistrates now ruling in Scotland, but more-
over,

over, had constituted among ourselves all kinds of magistrates, a Chancellor and President over all great men, &c. Orders, or Lords for a public politic convention, usurping an imagined power over the commands of those that are in authority; yea saying that all are to be cut off as open enemies, who do not acknowledge that government.

2dly, That the Societies are not pure in religion, which, they say, is manifest by questions proponed to all who are admitted to their fellowship, &c.

3dly, That the Societies are only a faction, and not a church, and that they have no power of calling pastors, or of giving ecclesiastic testimonies to any man; saying that they themselves are the most pure church, and that they have pastors, presbyteries and synods, and that it is their part to examine students, and to confirm them in the ministry with the imposition of hands, and that it is not lawful for any Hollandish Presbytery to pluck that right out of their hands.

4thly, That the students that were at Groningen were not of an unblameable life.

This being read, Mr. Langlands asked Mr. Barclay what he would say thereunto, and his reply was, that *he had no hand in such a letter* * : Then Mr. Langlands began to free Mr. Barclay of it, saying that he was at London at that time. To which we replied, How came it then that his name was insert there? Then they were forced to grant that Mr. Barclay had been at a consultation with James Stuart, Mr. Gordon, and some others, where an information was condescended upon to be sent away against us, and that Mr. Langlands wrote a letter but suspected it was yet in Mr. Gordon's hand; howbeit he affirmed he excerpted all the contents of it out of our public papers; (also it is not to be passed, that these ministers asserted that our Protestation against the Scots congregation in Rotterdam, was previous to Mr. Brackel's letter; and that this letter could give no occasion of drawing up the said Protestation; and also, that the Protestation was drawn up, and printed in Holland, before the suffering party did see it; both which they did maintain, until the contrary was sufficiently and clearly evidenced). As to the foresaid excerption of their letter, &c. it was replied by us, (abstracting from the

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disclaiming

* Here is a lie, and also a self-contradiction.

disclaiming the malignant interest, which we own as our duty) what public paper could he excerpt such things out of? particularly, that we were for killing all that would not acknowledge the government which we are said to have fabricated amongst us: But he cried out, that that transcript was forged and stuffed with lies. Our answer was, That it was a true transcript, and that Mr. Brackel could not, neither would he have forged such things.

Then after some unfruitful jangling, Mr. Barclay asked the reason why his ministry was rejected before he went out of Scotland? Some answered, Because of his condemning Sanquhar Declaration, even as to the matter of it, and not condemning (or allowing) the paying of the locality, which is given for the strengthening and upholding of soldiers against the work and people of God. But others answered, That the question was needly asked at them; for all that time which he spake of, he never came near their bounds, and so they had no opportunity either to receive or reject his ministry. But a multitude crowding about, they then brake out into loud out-cryings, for our Protestation against the Scotch congregation at Rotterdam, and inserting their names therein, and that we had sent for ordination to the Hollandish church, which they asserted to be purely Erastian: For when the magistrate pleased, he would send the minister a pair of shoes, and put him away. 2. That they used three washings in baptism: which Mr. Barclay affirmed to be Popish. 3. The Formular book. 4. Festival days, such as Yule and Pasch. 5. Organs in the kirk. After which they cried out, But pass all that †. To which some replied, That they had reflected sadly upon the church of Holland: And all Mr. James Renwick said at this time, was, that he had not meddled with the church of Holland, but only the Presbytery of Groningen; and that they being foreigners and not chargeable with defection, came under another consideration than ministers of our own church: Howbeit, he told them

† It cannot pass without a remark, that (as appears by some accounts at that time) a little before, these gentlemen gave high encomiums to the Hollanders, as being the chief bulwark against Popery, a refuge to the oppressed, &c. when seeking to induce people to join with Argyle; and laboured all they could to give the Dutch a bad impression of Scotch sufferers. And here they labour to give the Scots the same of the Dutch.

them his purpose to inform the foresaid venerable Presbytery how odiously such persons had represented them in Scotland, and if they could not clear themselves, at least of some of the grossest of these things, he would be willing to acknowledge before such as were competent, that he had offended in taking ordination from such an impure Presbytery.

This, for that time, did not a little allay the fire. They then said that they were not speaking of the Presbytery of Groningen, but of the church of Holland, yet they returned again, upon the same out-cries, but without particular application to the foresaid Presbytery: But it is evident that they intended all these things against the Presbytery: for we had meddled with no other, as to the matter of joining with them.

So this heat passing a little over: These ministers said that they were there offering themselves to concur in carrying on the public work; and that they desired to know if now the people would call them, or if they had any exceptions against them. Whereupon it was thought fit that they should remove a little, till the people knew others minds, that they might orderly give an answer. But finding themselves confused with a multitude, they thought fit to shew these ministers, that if they would be pleased to keep the day, they would appoint it, and nominate eight men from amongst them, to confer with them upon that, and other things. Howbeit they would not conclude any thing in the name of their brethren, but should present it to the General Meeting, which was to be upon the 29th day of the same month. Whereupon the 28th day was appointed for this conference.

So being met upon the said day, Mr. Barclay returned again upon his former question, asking why his ministry was rejected while he was in Scotland. To which some answered, that while he was in Scotland, they were joining with worse than he was, which they acknowledged to be their sin, but when the Lord opened their eyes better, they joined with these people whom they judged to be most at their duty, who at that time were deserted by all the ministers that were left, (after Mr. Cargill's death,) But the rest gave in these reasons: His condemning Sanquhar Declaration, and not the paying of the locality: His not joining with these that were at the public work, and countenancing too much the compliers of the time: and his not making a difference betwixt the
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clean and the unclean, the precious and the vile (and some of them said that they never had the opportunity of joining with him after the differences fell in among the ministers, howbeit the information they then had would have kept them back) they said these kept them at a distance from him. But there being no answer (at least not material) given to these things, and the going about of the question being marred by these ministers themselves, Mr. Barclay asked, will ye now join with us? or have ye any exceptions against us? To which this answer was given, that if differences could be removed in a right and honest way, we would be most willing to join with them. Then these ministers desired to hear what these exceptions might be. So they were given in (by Mr. James Renwick, when the question was put particularly to him, to which all agreed who sided not with these ministers) as followeth.

1st, Their not joining with such as were at the public work after Eothwel, *viz.* Mr. Cargil, and Mr. Cameron,

2^{dly}, Leaving the Country and deserting the work,

3^{dly}, Joining with the corrupt Scotch Congregation at Rotterdam, particularly of Mr. George, his hearing of Mr. Veitch, who was actively indulged at Mauchlin in Scotland.

4^{thly}, Informing abroad, against the suffering party at home and aspersing them with slanders, such as these in the forementioned information, sent to Mr. Brackel.

5^{thly}, Joining in the association, and owning the declaration published by the Earl of Argyle, and that party.

So having given in these: They asked first, whether these were his *scruples* meerly, or grounds that he had laid down for standing at a distance? and his answer was to this purpose, whatever difference be betwixt *scruples*, and *grounds*; these things were to him sufficient *reasons* to stand at a distance, while they remained. And again they asked, (granting all these things to be true) were they sufficient for us to stand at a distance for? To which he replied, That taking them (especially) conjunctly, they were to us sufficient reasons to stand at a distance while they stood unremoved. But, said they, even taking them conjunctly they are not,

This put the matter to a close, and put us altogether out of hope of getting differences removed. Notwithstanding these ministers began to answer to these things particularly,

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And as to the *first* exception, Mr. Barclay said he never declined to join with the forenamed persons in the public work. It was replied that his practice could not instruct it neither, that ever he did seek after it; as also, that it was strange how he could meet so often with others that were keeping themselves more close, and were not at the public work, and not with the foresaid persons, who were keeping the fields, and the rumour amongst friends weekly spread abroad of their going about the public work. To which Mr. Langland's was silent.

To the *second, viz.* their leaving the lands, and deserting their work; Mr. Langlands said that he went not out of the country until he had two calls to go abroad. But this needed no answer, he not instructing the sufficiency of these calls. And Mr. Barclay said that he had offered, when travelling through a great part of the country, that if but two persons in a whole shire would have invited him to preach, he would have staid. To it was this duplied, that he would have gotten hundreds in Clydesdale to have heard him. He said also, that he both wrote and came home himself every year. But it was duplied, that we neither saw, any of his letters, nor heard of his home coming.

As to the *third, viz.* their joining with the Scotch Congregation in Rotterdam, and particularly with Mr Veitch who was actually indulged. To which he replied, that he had contended more against that Congregation than many had done. Yet it was duplied, that while he joined with them under the consideration that they are, his contendings were to little purpose. And as to the hearing of Mr. Veitch, he said he was at the head of the seat, and could not win out, though he desired. But it was duplied that severals of the congregation, elders and others, did at that time withdraw, whereby the matter came to be more openly stated, which was the greater call to him to side with the testimony; and also that his withdrawing in that circumstance would have conduced more to the matter of his testimony than if he had been at the door. But he defended himself, saying that he could not see that, for it would have given great offence. To which was answered, that none could take offence but such as were of one judgment with the indulged.

About this time was brought in that which included a sixth reason against these ministers, from their expressing their judgment anent joining with the joiners with the
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indulged, and defending the same, for they said that they both would, and should join with such, but they would not make it a rule to others. To which our reply was, that we were against joining with such: And if we should join with such, while they defended the same, might we not also join with the indulged themselves? Then it was retorted upon us by William Cleland, to which the ministers did agree, that we joined with a more corrupt church, *viz.* that of Groningen, who had all these abuses formerly mentioned. To which was replied, that there was a difference to be made in joining with ministers going back, and defending their defections, and with those (though even corrupt in some things from which they never were reformed) that were advancing, and groaning under their remaining corruptions. And Mr. James Renwick said he protested in the face of the Presbytery against all things he knew among them dissonant to the reformation of the church of Scotland, which was to him sufficient, they being under such considerations. They said they looked upon this as to no purpose seeing they continued in them. Also Mr. James joining with them being ministers of a foreign church, came under a general consideration as Protestants, which joining with ministers of our own church came not under.

Again, it was objected: But could not we have joined with the Scotch Congregation at Rotterdam under that same general consideration. To which it was answered, that we could not, because they came under a more special consideration, for in joining with ministers of our church, we ought to know that they keep up the testimony against the sins of our own place; but in joining with these of a foreign church, if they keep up the testimony against the sins in their own place, they are not to be discountenanced for not contending against our defections. But supposing we had sinned therein, this could not have justified their practice; for, as was told them, *Recriminatio nulla est responsio.*

To the *fourth*, *viz.* informing abroad, against the suffering party at home. To which they answered, that there was nothing in their information but what was excerpted out of our public papers. But we replied, that such things could not be excerpted (no such thing being in them.) However, they fell out in great outrage against our declarations, calling Rutherglen Testimony

an insignificant thing, and inveighing against that in *Sanquhar Declaration*, where the publishers call themselves, the representatives of the church, and covenanted nation of Scotland. And that in *Lanerk Declaration*, where the historical relation of *Sanquhar Declaration* expresses these words, done by a convention of Estates, and that itself was published in our name and authority. To which our reply was to this purpose, that we would do so much for procuring a right union, which we were so desirous of, as to condescend so far to them, as not to impose these words upon them, these words not being the matter of the present testimony, if they would approve of, and accord with the matter of these declarations, the actions done, and the testimonies given by them; they being so great and necessary duties, which we could not pass from, else we should condemn many former, and later contendings, and trample upon many noble testimonies: howbeit we could not refuse from, nor expunge these forementioned words (as we expressly told them:) Notwithstanding that we condescended so far, they would not consent unto us, but objected even against the matter of them, saying that they could not be owned as they came from us. Howbeit they still reiterated their inveighings against the foresaid declarations, making use of them against us, notwithstanding of what was said before: Crying out also much against the first call to the ministers: And though we told them we had corrected that by a second, yea, though they often granted, that it was well, that it was so corrected, yet they would never cease from their inveighings against the first.

Howbeit it is not to be forgotten how sadly the cause hath been wronged, and how much we have been mistaken by the differing and wrong copies, especially, of our first Declaration published at *Sanquhar*, June 22d, 1680. spread thro' this, and other lands, from which, many have taken much ground against us. And as for our declaring of war in that declaration, our understanding of it is conform to our apologetic declaration, affixed upon the kirk doors, November, 1684.

To the *fifth*, viz. their joining in the association, and agreeing with the declaration of that party: Both which they owned as their duty, and asked what we could say against them. To which we answered, that some of the associators, were guilty of the blood shed at *Air's-moss*, (particularly *Sir John Cochran*) And as to the declara-

tion, we objected that it did not make mention of our covenants expressly, nor of presbyterial government, which was forborne of purpose lest the Sectarians should be irritated, as some of themselves said. 2dly, That express mention was made of the sufferings of some, who were a stain to the profession of religion, and not of the most cruel sufferings of such of the honest party as would have held out the iniquity of their laws far more. This we know to be done of purpose to bury our sufferings, as was evident from their refusing to insert the barbarous usage of valiant *Rathillet*. 3dly, That it opened a door for taking in amongst them, even the greatest of their enemies.

To which little was answered at that time; however at other times, they said to the first. That tho' presbyterial government was not express, it was understood. But we said that in declarations to the world, it ought to have been express. And they said the covenants were not mentioned, because of its binding us to defend the king. To which we duplied, to this purpose, that the conditional ties of the covenant were loosed, by the first breakers of the condition, yet because of its morally obliging articles, it should have been express.

Some of them said, that the express mentioning of our sufferers particularly of *Rathillet*, was forborne, because the *Declaration being drawn up without these; they had engaged before they came from Amsterdam, neither to add, alter, nor diminish*. But for the reason why Mr. Carstairs and Mr. Spence's sufferings were mentioned, Mr. George Barclay said that that was done after they came to the Highlands. How to reconcile this, with what they said before, we see not.

As to the third, They said they opened no door, as to these who were guilty of death. But we objected, that their practice proved the contrary, in that they had, as a leading man amongst them, *Sir John Cochran of Ochletree*, who was not free of the blood at Air's-moiss.

This is the substance of what past that day: Only toward evening these ministers declared their willingness to lay things in present controversy aside, until they should be determined by a competent judicatory; which we refused to do, because it would be a calling truth into question.

Upon the morrow, being the 29th day, and the day of our General meeting, we went forward into the place
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appointed, whereunto these ministers came also; and the first thing that was done, there was a relation given of what had past the days preceding. To make it appear how fairly we dealt with them, we suffered one who sided with them in the controversies, to give the foresaid relation, and the rest of us stood by auditors.

After this was done, (having deliberated a little among ourselves) we thought it the fittest way, either for removing of differences (if possible) or for the further clearing of them, or giving us the fairer off-come in the eyes of the world, to make this proposal to the foresaid ministers, that they together by themselves, would draw up the sins of the times and we together would do the like: So then if we would agree anent the public sins (every one taking freely with what is applicable to themselves) we would consequently agree anent the public duties, and so would go on together in the public work: And if we shall not agree anent these, then they would see more clearly where we stood, and we would see more clearly where they stood. But they rejected this proposal.

Albeit they had formerly oftener than once, at a meeting accidentally July 23d, desired that the causes of humiliation should be drawn by them and us, separately. So our proposal had its first rise from them; but now when it was proposed by us, they would not yield thereunto, except in the mean time, they should be joined with in the exercise of their ministry, which we said we could not do, till once the differences were removed.

At which time they went off this head, producing the protestation against the Scotch Congregation in Rotterdam, and reading that article wherein their names, with some others, was insert, together with some general charges, which they did represent so, as if guilty of these things they deserved not to live, crying out who would own that article which very few refused to own. Yet Mr. Renwick replied thereunto, that the names of the persons in that article, and these general charges were written in cumulo, and cast in a heap together, which he counted an oversight, and an injury; but he desired these things to be understood separately, and so he offered to make out every word thereof, for there was not one charge there, which was not applicable to some of the persons there named. And he said that none could plead innocent, as to untender dealing with

other; yet with untenderness towards us, they would in no wise grant, though their charges against us were false, and far more grievous than what we had laid upon them. So after some unfruitful jangling, he cried out that now all the world may see that any unwillingness to unite in the Lord cannot be laid at our door.

But after we had been parted a little, these ministers sent some with this overture unto us, That they would be content to draw up the causes of humiliation, providing Mr. James Renwick would go with them for that effect: And the people would join with them in the meantime: And either prove what was said in that article of the foresaid protestation, or else to emit somewhat to take it away. To which our reply was, That as to that article of the protestation, we should either do the one, or the other; however we were not doubtful to prove it.

And as to what in the proposal concerned Mr. James Renwick to answer, he replied thus, That he could not accept of the overture; *1st*, Because they had first proposed our overture, but they refused it, when it came from us, at the proponing whereof, they offered to lay all debates aside until it was seen what that should produce; and when we made the foresaid proposal, they brought in the foresaid article of the foresaid protestation against us. *2^{dly}*, Because he could not join in so much with them, while the forementioned exceptions stood in the way. *3^{dly}*, If they and he, so far differing from other, should be together about such a work, they should prove but a hinderance to one another. And as to what concerned the people, they (except some few, who sided with these ministers) replied that they could not join with them while the forementioned differences stood.

After which they called the people together, and Mr. Langlands gave them a relation of what had past in our conference, these days before, representing still our declarations and the ordination of Mr. James Renwick in an hideous manner, reading over the foresaid information sent to Mr. Brackel against us; but passing the articles lightly without any satisfaction, reading also the foresaid article of the foresaid protestation, interpreting the word *treacherously*, to import a design to betray the cause, asserting that if these things they were charged with, were true; they were not worthy to live, far less to be ministers.

After which, Mr. James began to resume what Mr. Robert Langlands had said before the people; and as to the foresaid papers which Mr. Langlands had read in their audience, he desired that the two might be compared together, and then it would be seen who had laid the heaviest charge upon the other. As to the falsehood of what was informed against the suffering party, they were all conscious thereof. And for what was said in that article of the foresaid Protestation, understanding it separately, he offered to make it out every word.— But night being come, and an alarm also coming, we were forced to part the more abruptly.

Now, much honoured Sir, We have here given you as full a relation as is needful, of what past betwixt these ministers and us, and so true, that (though we cannot say that every thing is *verbatim*, as it was spoken, yet) there is not the least prevarication as to the matter. And we may say that the Lord took this affair in his own hand, and did, as it were, hide us in it, that he might the more appear. We used all the tenderness we could, forbearing to say many things, lest the fire had been hotter, and we reputed a people unwilling to unite upon any terms. But from this you will clearly see where both they and we stand, and what distance is betwixt us. We have not only the fury of the open enemy to abide, who are employing all their might, so far as the holy wisdom of God permits, in imprisoning, stigmatizing, lugg-marking, banishing and killing: But also, fiery and hot contendings with others who pretend more respect to the work of God than we dare do. Our difficulties are very many, and it is most hard to guide such a case as ours is; but it hath pleased the Lord in infinite wisdom from eternity to carve out such a lot for us, that he may perfect strength in weakness, and wisdom in folly. We desire to rejoice in appearing to be nothing, that he may be seen to be all things. And as we are reproached, mistaken, misrepresented, wounded, wronged, contemned, yea, a contemptible remnant, as ever had such things among their hands; if God shall make our names, our enjoyments, and our all, stepping-stones for him, whereupon to walk for the advancement of his name and interest in the earth, we desire to be heartily content, to offer them up upon that service.

Pray for us that we faint not in the day of trial; that God may lead us in the good old way, and prevent or
break

break the snares laid by men for subverting of our paths ; granting us grace to follow him fully unto the end, to the praise of the glory of his own name. Remember us kindly to all our dear friends in Christ with you, though unknown by face ; the report which we have of their faithfulness, tenderness, and zeal for the work of God, is very favourable and encouraging to their burden-bearing, and sympathy manifested towards us in the furnace of affliction, toward yourself and your dear brother's family, doth bind us greatly to them as their debtors ; and we know no other way now, how to recompense them, but by being often at the throne of grace on their behalf, which is and shall be our endeavour : And shew unto them that we forget them not, and we hope that they bear us upon their hearts before the Lord. Thus we remain,

*Much honoured and dear Sir, your friends
and servants in the Lord Jesus.*

Subscribed in our name, and by our direction, by the
Clerk of our General Meeting,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

It was also concluded by this meeting, that a letter directed to Mr. Hamilton, presented and read to them, should be subscribed in their name by the clerk of the meeting ; which was done.

It was likewise concluded, that every society should do their utmost to gather up a list of the names, and an account of the sufferings of those within their respective bounds, who suffered martyrdom and otherwise ; as also of the enemies barbarous dealing and cruelty there, and of any signal and remarkable judgments that had been inflicted upon any of these enemies : and all expedition was to be used herein, that the whole being collected together, might be for the good and comfort of the present and succeeding generations. Somewhat of this was done, but not so much as was desired.

It was in like manner concluded, that the 19th of *November* should be observed by the Societies a day of fasting and prayer ; that considering our weakness and insuffi-

insufficiency either to withstand snares which we may be, and are trysted with from all hands; that the Lord would be graciously pleased to prevent them or else break them, lest our ways should be subverted, and turned aside from the ways of God.

Also, it was concluded, that the 24th of *December* should be observed by the Societies a day of fasting and prayer, That considering the suffering of the Lord's name thereby, he would be graciously pleased to take some way in clearing and vindicating of his cause, and removing away the mistakes and reproaches cast upon his people: And considering the greatness and increase of the harvest, that he will send forth faithful labourers.

And it was appointed that the next General Meeting should convene at *Frierminion*, upon the 28th of *January*, 1686.

- Follows the foresaid Letter to Mr. Hamilton.

Honourable Sir,

THERE are many strange observations that may be drawn from our case, but none more obvious than these which are clear to all who have eyes to see, to wit, That the Lord is taking all pains to humble his people, and lay them low: But if he shall hereby raise up his work and prepare them for being exalted, Why not? Let us rejoice therein; and that he is using all means for carrying on a work of discovery in bringing right and wrong to light, yea, he is saying by all his way of dealing, that he will have every one tried, and the righteousness of some and the unrighteousness of others brought to light: And if he shall by this, bring about the clearing of his cause and the making of his truth more precious, let us with all chearfulness be content, yea, adore him for such a noble way of working! For surely the Lord's work of discovery is not terrible and damping, but chearing and pleasing to the sincere and upright. You and we are called to the stage of combat and lifts of contending in this our day; and not only to be loaded with heavy and grievous imputations, which surely would crush any who were not of seared, obdurate and adamantine hearts, were it not that consciousness of sincerity, integrity and innocency, and the
sight

fight of what shall be the noble, profitable and pleasant product of these things, *viz.* The advantage of the work of God, the clearing of the owners thereof, and the confounding of evil-speakers, who *shall not be established in the earth.* This doth bear up our hearts and cherish our spirits in travelling thro' such deeps, tho' not the shallowest, and in bearing such causeless burdens, though not the lightest.

Howbeit, we have thought it fit to shew unto your Honour, some things which have been reported of you unto us, with no small confidence; hereby desiring that you would not mistake, looking upon us as if we were become jealous of you, and receiving such things for truth, as we hope you can prove your innocency of. But our love and respect to the Lord's glorious cause, which we own, and to your good name, which we are bound still according to verity to defend; we have here written unto you some few things, of which we do humbly and earnestly desire that you would write unto us the truth, instructing your own innocency, that so we may have wherewith to stop the mouth of such narrators. As,

1st, You are said to have countenanced the proclamation of the Hamilton declaration with your drawn sword in your hand,

2^{dly}, You are said to have subscribed the petition to the Duke of Monmouth, in your own name, and in the name of the army.

3^{dly}, To have received large money from Dutch people for printing the testimonies of the martyrs, and not to have improven it for that use.

4^{thly}, To have received large money from the Dutch, in the name and for the behoof of the suffering party in Scotland, of which they never got any account.

Now, Right honourable Sir, All these things are reported to you of us, and asserted by some with no small confidence; all which they offer to prove. But their assertion hath not got the place of probation with us. Notwithstanding, we thought it greatly our duty, upon the foresaid considerations to acquaint you herewith, desiring you may vindicate yourself according to truth, which we both long and hope for: And whatsoever may be found wrong in you, or us, or any other person, we desire to be far from either denying, extenuating or excusing it.

Moreover, for further clearing and corroborating of the cause, we desire that you will send with this bearer,

a true,

a true, full and exact probation of that protestation against the Scotch congregation at Rotterdam, especially of that article so often mentioned in our information sent unto you: For tho' many of us be convinced of the truth of all these things in that protestation, yet it is requisite that in such a day, when many sorts of people are lying at the catch, that we have wherewith to stop their mouths, lest some who know not such things may be stumbled; for many whom we have to do with, will not take with any thing, though never so guilty, except it can be sufficiently proven against them.

Also, we desire that it may be tried, and an account sent unto us, Whether or not Mr. Brackel received a letter written by Mr. Langlands, containing such accusations against us as are mentioned in our information, accordingly as he wrote to you when at Groningen; or if he had these accusations given him by Mr. Kooleman by word of mouth, by virtue of a commission to him for that effect, which was the occasion whereupon he wrote such things to you; or if Mr. Brackel will own his writing such things, and instruct what was the occasion thereof: For Mr. Langlands did openly assert that Mr. Brackel's letter, the true transcript whereof we read, is stuffed with lies.

Finally, We desire that you will be at pains in dealing with the presbytery of Groningen, that they would answer to what is laid to their charge by the Scottish ministers, to the end that the ordination of Mr. James Renwick may be rendered odious; according to his humble desire, as he writeth to them and to you. For though we be not calling in question the lawfulness of his ordination, yet it is requisite to have something from their hands to convince gainfayers.

Now, what shall we say, it is a hard matter to carry right in such a day. We have all need to take heed to ourselves, looking both before and behind us; for God's eye is always upon us, and man's eye is most intently beholding us; for we may say with the Psalmist, *They meet, they lurk, they mark our steps.* But let us trust in the Lord, and do good. Let us delight ourselves in God, and commit our way to him, and he shall bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day: To whom be glory for ever.

Thus leaving you upon his care, and praying that

judgment and righteoufness may meet again in the earth.
We are,

Dear Sir, Yours as formerly,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

P. S. Remember us kindly to Thomas Lining, whom we pray the Lord may fit for his intended work, and make him a faithful and painful workman in his vineyard, that we may reap the fruit of his labour, to the praise and glory of God. Let us hear what progress he makes, and if you think the Lord is fitting him for that work, and if there is any hope of a cleanly ordination.

This Letter, with the relation of the conferences mentioned before, were sent to Mr. Hamilton with Colin Alifon soon after the meeting, who sent back with Colin Alifon, before the next meeting, a long letter in answer to theirs: A short abstract of which shall be here given.

To the Anti-popish, Anti-prelatick, Anti-erastian, Anti-sectarian, true Presbyterian remnant of the Church of Scotland.

*Much Honoured Fellow-Sufferers, and Companions
in tribulation,*

NOT knowing if ever I may see your face in time, or whether this may be the last of my letters to you, through a deep apprehension of almost unparaelled judgments to be poured out on that land, and on all the churches of Christ throughout the world; I have chosen from love to the cause of Christ, the satisfaction of the poor remnant with you, and for the glory of our blessed Lord and Master, to write to you what I judge most seasonable in the present juncture, and may be in some measure serviceable to posterity. And as I have desired as it were, to take my pen out of the Lord's hand, and to set myself in his presence and under his eye, who sees and knows all things, even the hidden secrets of the heart, and before whom ere long I must give an account of this in-hand, and all other things; so it warms my
heart

heart not a little, to think to whom I am writing: To the Lord's people, to his poor, persecuted, despised, reproached remnant, to the children of my dear mother-church, and my dear sympathizing brethren.

O it is not to the Papistical, Prelatical, apostate, malignant usurpers, by whom for many years I have been under the sentence of death, for no other cause than for the holding up of Christ's standard, the work of reformation, the laws and liberties of my native country.

Nor am I writing to that company of ministers, who calling themselves an Assembly, cited before them, and endeavoured to thrust out Mr. Richard Cameron for his faithfulness to his Master; and to excommunicate insignificant me for my owning, accompanying and assisting of him, (though alas! but very weakly).

Neither am I writing to such as these at *Dunscore*, ministers, elders and others, who passed a sentence against great Mr. Cameron; and cited me before them, imagining to threaten and boast me out of my conscience; yet I being on the place, and appearing, after disowning them for an Assembly, and adhering to what I did formerly, I formally protested against them, leaving my protestation with them, and left them.

Neither to such an Assembly as that at the bridge of Ken, where the greatest of the ministers and elders were assembled, to invade the whole country of Galloway, Nithsdale, Kyle, Carrick, &c. to their ordering and government, to engage them to call none but those whom they should name to them; by this stratagem intending to exclude great Cameron, and shut the door on all faithful preaching in these parts: Whereof I being advertised, accompanied with one or two more, entered a formal protestation against them, which through the Lord's blessing broke their design; they threatening to excommunicate me, laid out themselves as the other Assemblies had done, by all means imaginable to load me with the most foul and horrid aspersions.

Neither to such a company of ministers and others, who were at Bothwell, who sought to make my life a burden to me, and hold me in continual vexation and sorrow of spirit, upon no other account but because of my former and present contendings, for disowning and keeping out a malignant and erastian interest, then intended and carried on amongst them, which is now discovered in Argyle's march; and for my labouring to have

a day of fasting observed, wherein the sins of the la a might have been disowned and acknowledged.

Neither to such a company, who after the break at Bothwel, sat down in the Old Clachan of Galloway, and plotted and determined to take away my life, for my contending with Mr. John Welch and those gentlemen he brought with him; and my opposing and disowning of Hamilton Declaration; and after the Lord wonderfully disappointed them by discovering their design, yet again met, and wrote a letter to some that were with me, that if they kept my company, they would cause that the country should neither afford them meat, drink, nor any manner of quarters; but if they would disown me, they should be honourably entertained.

Neither to such a company of ministers and others, who after I was come to Holland, upon the call of worthy Mr. Cargill, Mr. Brown and Mr. M'Ward, posted a Commissioner against me there, with 20 or 30 articles, the most of them criminal; for answer to which I refer you to Mr. M'Ward's own letter.

Neither is it to that company of plotters, ministers and others, who were associate with Monmouth and Argyll, who judged no way more convenient to carry on their designs, than by loading me with heavy and false reproaches, and by employing John Haddow under the mask of zeal and straightness in the cause, to pervert you from it and divide you among yourselves, and to involve you in an engagement with sectaries, malignants and bloody men, contrary to former national sacred engagements. That party, so long as they had any hope of gaining me, did set on me with the greatest insinuations and acclamations (to myself) commenting on my long and great sufferings, zeal, piety, &c. until they saw it was in vain; and then they raged.—I remember this was likewise John Haddow's way at my house in Friezland, a little before he shipped with Argyll; for after he had harangued on my zeal, sufferings, piety, usefulness to the church, &c. I interrupted him, and using freedom against his practice and others with him: Upon which he burst out, saying he had ever hitherto defended me, but now he should give me a cast, and make me infamous wherever he went. But, poor man, he was far out in his politics; for when he returned to his associates, he took some of them to witness that he had ever defended me; to which they assented:

But

But now said he, I am resolved to be his enemy wherever I come.

Finally, Neither am I writing, (I hope) to such a company of strangers who at my first coming to Friezland received me heartily, with my informations of the precious cause, and wrestlings of the church of Scotland, and embodied themselves in societies, and run with great zeal, to contribute unto, and imitate you, in espousing the Lord's cause as stated with us, and for a time there was nothing but fastings and prayers for it, and using means with magistrates and ministers for Scotland's reformation; and the Lord took a noble testimony off their hand, such as scarcely had ever been seen in thir lands, against the magistrates usurpation over the church. Yet upon a small temptation Mr. Brackel first broke off, in accepting his woeful Erastian call to his now church in Rotterdam: And I protesting against it, was then, and still am deserted by the most of them (though blessed be the Lord, not without his signal approbation of my testimony, to the conviction of many) whereupon Mr. Brackel, not without much prejudice at me, fell in with Monmouth's and Argyle's plotters, whereby the Lord's cause is made contemptible, and I loaded with their reproaches among strangers, that if the Lord had not graciously kept a small handful standing faithfully in this place, in all probability I had been redacted to the greatest outward straits.

I say, it doth not a little comfort me, that it is to none of all these forementioned persons and parties that I am writing: But unto you, O lovely Remnant, unto you O dear followers of the Lamb: The little flock of Christ in poor Scotland. Unto you, who have not only been honoured to stick to him, against all opposition; but to crown him again and again at Hebron. (O! the blessing of him who was separate from his brethren he upon you, and long may the crown flourish upon his head.) Unto you, O highly honoured, and dearest fellow sufferers, and sympathizing brethren, to whose sympathy, wrestlings and prayers, not only all the churches of Christ are indebted, but also, poor contemned, and every way persecuted, unworthy, unworthy ROBIN HAMILTON is unspeakably indebted to you.

O beloved, my eyes are running down with tears, my heart is melting within me, I know not how I am both weeping and rejoicing, with the very thoughts that I see
you

you reading my feckless line; I think I see the tears in your eyes, for my case; I think I hear secret sighings and sobbings, going up before the throne for me: yea, I think I win a little to see (*at which I must lay by my pen*) your lovely Lord, and my Lord, stretching out his soft hand to receive, and bottle your tears, and to make them acceptable in your behalf, and my behalf, and to lay them out in another manner than ye or I can.

The subject of which your letter speaks, and which I am now upon, in so far as it strikes only at me in particular, is made very easy unto me, looking on the cross of Christ, this day, as above the world's crown, that in any measure he should make me conformable to himself and to my poor mother church.—But it is sore and wounding, when I think that the glorious cause of Christ, should be questioned on my account; or that ye, my companions in tribulation, should suffer on my account; O the rage of enemies is cruel, yea more cruel than the *Ostrich's*. Lord, they persecute those whom thou hast smitten, and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.

What are these biased, prejudicate, politic, and embittered men seeking? whom the Lord has so fully discovered, and on whom he has rubbed shame and confusion, and who are called to lie in sackcloth, in dust and ashes; Alas! *a generation pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. A generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eye-lids are lifted up. A generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw-teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men, Prov. xxx. 12, 13, 14.* But O Lord, my eyes are towards thee. Who chargest that thou mayst discharge; who woundest that thou mayst heal, and killest that thou mayst make alive. Lord open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

Loving Brethren, I shall begin at Hamilton Declaration and the supplication to Monmouth, which I have been made to call BEN-ONI. And I shall as in the sight of an all-seeing God, give the historical relation thereof; and next, as the Lord will help to give you my thoughts thereof, and shall desire in all, to take shame unto myself, that the Lord may be glorified, the truth confirmed, posterity informed, and enemies on right and left hand confounded.

I shall

I shall pass by (which enemies would bury) the many wrestlings and contendings for Christ and his cause, that poor I, had at that time, it being more suitable for others, than for me, though there be but small probability of a vindication that way, they being for most part in glory, who were eye-witnesses to it, (yet the Lord lives, let the earth rejoice,) neither is it so pertinent for the present occasion.

That morning before the proclaiming of Hamilton Declaration, there came an alarm to me,* that there was a party of our friends beset with the enemy, whereupon immediately, I mounted my horse, (which for most part was at my head, in the fields, saddled) and came to the muir, where I found that all the officers I had any confidence in, were already out upon service. Yet seeing two, or three, that then seemed somewhat honest, A. Turnbull, &c. I desired them to follow me, who all positively refused, on account of the hazard, alledging the enemies to be far above their number. Whereupon I told them I would go myself alone, and went away, without being obeyed by any of them: but finding a company of Teviotdale men, who alledged they wanted a captain, they willingly offered themselves to me; and a Galloway gentleman, and some few with him, about break of day; so marching out of the duke's park, (which was my quarters where the foot mostly lay) old Major Carmichael met me, and told me that Mr. Home in my absence was going to read the Declaration, I told him to return immediately, and upon his highest peril to stop him, which he did, though with great difficulty, being necessitate with his drawn sword to drive him away.

As I returned again, being broken and wearied with continual toils, travels, and watchings without the least refreshment. Mr. Welch, with several others, came to me, as I lighted in the muir, and set upon me for proclaiming their Declaration, (Rathillet being then with me, who said he would protest against it). I opposed it flatly, and told what I had to say against it, viz. Its owning the tyrant's interest, and not mentioning

* It appeared afterward that this false alarm, was a stratagem, of purpose devised to be quit of him, and all such officers whom they knew would oppose it. Similar to what they did on Sabbath, by another false alarm, that there was a body of Militia assembled at Campsie, &c.

ing the sins of the time. At last he, with three or four gray headed old men, begged of me with tears, that it might but be proclaimed, and these things should be helped in it. Whereupon I, (alas) after a long times fighting, yielded that it should be done, providing the Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties were put in it, those things helped in it, and that Mr. Thomas Douglas, and Mr. John King should proclaim it, and that it should not be printed untill all these things were helped.

Now that which moved me most to this, was, that through my broken and confused case that I was in, *1st*, I thought that the tyrant's interest had been cast off, in the Acknowledgement of Sins, &c. as I knew the Erastian, and Sectarian interest was. *2^{dly}*, I thought that the letting it be proclaimed with these conditions foresaid, would be nothing for that party's interest, but for their ruin, which indeed it did, though was contrary to their intention, and not from any good management of mine. *2^{dly}*, I thought it would put them off till Mr. Cargill's draught of a declaration, was ready, which he had promised to us, and I was waiting with an intention to proclaim it so soon as it came to my hand.

Thus, my dear friends, I was lamentably insnared, whereupon, without further deliberation, I went to the cross, and as I used when marching with any company through towns, with my sword in my hand, expecting to hear it proclaimed as they had engaged, but when coming to the place, and being thronged in, with the crowd, I was made both to see and hear other things, as you all know, which struck me so dead, that I knew not well where I was, or what I was doing. I then ran up to Sarah Jeans, a change-house in Hamiltoun where Mr. Welch, and some other of the ministers came, and seeing him and them, I told them that they had dealt treacherously with us, and had murdered the Lord's cause, and the poor army; at which he was so dashed, that he spake not one word.

Whereupon I went out immediately, and called a counsel of war, to disannul what was done; and when at that business, the ministers sent again to us, to see if the counsel of war would adhere to their Declaration, to which we declared we would not. After we had disannulled the Declaration, we next concluded that the Causes of the Lord's Wrath should be drawn up, and that Hamilton

milton Declaration shall be mentioned as one of the causes thereof, and that Mr. Cargill, with the assistance of Henry Hall, Mr. Walter Smith, &c. should be employed in it, and that in all haste, they should send us the new Declaration that Mr. Cargill was drawing up, and that both should be proclaimed and printed immediately.

This, though concluded, and undertaken, yet alas! the Lord never honoured us publicly to perform it. In the mean time, Mr. Welch, and that party, notwithstanding of all this, caused some horse-men to steal to Glasgow, and print it.

One thing which made my yielding more weighty to me, was, that when I yielded, that noble instrument, and great Hero, for Christ, Rathillet, said to Mr Welch, that he would protest against any such thing, which throughout my confusion in the time, I little noticed, but afterwards it was bitter, O bitter to me.

As to the petition to Monmouth, it was thus, on the Saturday, the day before the defeat, I, and other officers hearing that the Galloway gentlemen were come up to join with the army, and being informed that they were of Mr. Welch's, and Mr. Hume's judgment, we called a counsel of war, where we might determine that none should be admitted to join with us but such as were found straight in the cause as now stated amongst us against the Declaration of Hamiltoun, and for acknowledging and disowning the lands fins, &c. When we were set, these Galloway gentlemen came in upon us with their ministers, undesired, and uncalled for, whereupon I, in name of the rest, gave them a short account how the cause was stated, and how that neither officers nor soldiers were to be admitted, without joining with us therein.

These gentlemen told us positively that they would not adhere to such a cause, nor join with us therein; but pressed that the officers might be changed, and new ones brought in, and such a way laid down as all that would join with them, might be brought in; and that all by-gones, should be by-gones, or at least laid aside, until a General Assembly, and a Parliament were got. Whereupon I rose up, and entered my protestation against them, being backed with some others, and declaring that I durst not venture my life, and the life of the Lord's people with such a company, and in such a cause; whereupon immediately I parted from them, and some

of the officers with me; after I had been an hour or two from them, being outwearied, and almost wholly spent, I sat down in the muir alone, and fell in a deep sleep, and lay so, until two commiffionate gentlemen from Galloway came and awaked me, begging me, with my friends to return, affuring us we should have all satisfaction, upon which I and my friends did return: They said they had something to propose which greatly concerned the army. I answered that we were returned the same men that we were, when we left them, and were here to adhere to our former protestation; then I desired them to say on; They most subtly waving what I had spoken, said that it was their desire, that in this Council it might be proposed whether or not a supplication might be drawn up, and presented to the duke of Monmouth.

Thus they dealt deceitfully with us, they having in our absence, without our knowledge, chosen a new preses and a new clerk (*viz.* Mr. John Dick, and with unanimous consent, had concluded on a supplication, which their ministers who were there present had before made up amongst them) which being read, they had all assented thereunto. Upon which, I, though wholly ignorant of what had been amongst them, in the name of friends, protested against any such thing; Whereupon their new clerk in his precipitant zeal, cried out disdainfully, that it was already done. We told him since it was so, it was their deed, and not ours: They finding themselves mired, stood not to deny it. Whereupon we shewed the unlawfulness of their proposal, holding out the sinfulness of it. And they finding themselves straitned in their arguments, one of them said we might hear it, so their new clerk brought it forth, and when read, we found it stuffed, from end to end, with malignant loyalty, wholly subverting the state of our cause: Whereupon I, again in the name of the rest, entered a protestation against it, and rose up and left them, imagining that we should have no more been troubled with them. Yet they again sent after us, desiring that two gentlemen, and a minister of each party should confer a little in the business. Rathillet, Mr. Cargill and I were to be for our party.—And Mr. Andrew Morton was their minister. Mr. Cargill prest me to it, and at last I assented.

When

When we met again, I protested against all supplications, and after sometimes debating, I said if they were willing to have the duke informed of our judgment of his fathers, and his own rebellion blasphemies and usurpations in matters of church and state, and to desire him to lay down his weapons against the Lord and his people, I should assent to that, but to no other thing. Whereupon Mr. Andrew Morton answered, that was all they were seeking. Which his party, when they were advertised of it, raged at him for: But I took him at his word. He also proposed that I might give it in writ to them; I answered that seeing he was in my judgment, that he and worthy Mr. Cargill who was deputed by us, would do it better than me; so we parted, begging them to be free and faithful, which Mr. Cargill cheerfully undertook; this being Saturday's night. Before the break of day, on Sabbath morning, being assaulted by the enemy at the bridge, and being already engaged, I was running and riding through the army, where I met one of the Carrick Captains running after one of his own men with his drawn sword to kill him. because by inattention he had by a shot, slightly hurt him in the breast, and with much difficulty I got him stopt from killing the poor man. And immediate-Major Learmond sent express to me, in all haste to come in person with three troops of horse, or companies of foot for relief.

In the very midst of all these confusions, came Mr. William Blackader to me with a paper in one hand, and pen and ink in the other, and told me he came from Mr. Cargill with this information to *Monmouth*, and who begged me in all haste to send it over to him. I asked him in haste if it was Mr. Cargill's work, he said yes. Whereupon I did subscribe it without reading it, and desired him to give it to two of the officers at the bridge to deliver it to *Monmouth*. So that until I was in *Holland*, and heard it from that party, I never suspected that any other thing had been in it save what I have told you.

Thus, dear Brethren, you have the matter of fact faithfully related, as in the sight of an all-seeing God—and I might have much to say in my own vindication in both these particulars, before the world, as being a time wherein matters were far from that clearness and distinc-

ness that they are now*. And though the Lord had been graciously pleased to employ me for his cause and interest, some years before that, yet it was but like inland voyages, in comparison of that great deep of Bothwel.—And there being a great difference betwixt the theory and practice of any thing; and more easy for a company upon land to see more enormities in the conduct of poor mariners at sea, tossed betwixt wind and wave; than they themselves can see, though they be no less concerned in the ship's preservation. Yea shipwreckt mariners look back on their own enormities and in the like case afterward may amend them.—And though with boldness and confidence I dare to take the Lord to witness, that whatever I was left to do, in my mismanaging these two particulars, through confusion, simplicity and inadvertency, it was far from my design or intention to alter my former way of acting and contending, which the Lord had been graciously pleased to honour me in formerly;—ever counting it my greatest happiness and security to stand to, contend and suffer for my owning his cause, as it was then, and now is more clearly stated by you, the faithful Remnant of Scotland. I say, whatever these things might plead for, at the hands of sympathising on-lookers; yet so far were they from helping or easing me, when for a long time, the Lord's chastning hand lay heavily upon me, in discovering his displeasure against me, and suspending his love and the light of his countenance from me; and outwardly, in a strange land, trying me with many sharp trials, so that the sympathy of friends, would have made me to suspect them, and all such reasonings of that nature, were rather aggravating than easing. So that many thousand times, I would have coveted the greatest of tortures, to have but once had the occasion of giving an open and free testimony against these two particulars, and but an assembly of my old companions, the Lord's people in that land, to have acknowledged my sin, with shame, sorrow, and grief unto them. Neither was there these

* For understanding of this, it is to be considered that although Mr. Hamilton and many others at that time were against explicitly espousing the interest, and owning the authority of Charles II. yet they had not, nor did not expressly disown, and reject his civil authority until the next year, as is evident in their Declaration at Rutherglen, May 29th, wherein they neither own nor disown the said authority, compared with their Declaration at Sanquhar, 1680.

any thing at that time, that more endeared you unto me, than when I heard of your zeal, and resentment of these two things; and as then, so no less now, I think it my glory to acknowledge it unto you, and throw myself at your feet, O pleasant, faithful and fixed wanderers, prisoners, banished, plundered, wounded and stigmatized remnant; to be disposed of, and to give what satisfaction ye, or the famous Church of Scotland shall judge requisite, according to the degree of my offence.

O what should I not do, for the setting forth of his glory, whom I dishonoured, and for the satisfaction of the generation of the righteous, whom I offended. O! *Who is a God like unto him, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of his people, he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy: Who has made that word (Psalm xxxii. 5.) sweet to some, I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquities have I not hid: I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin, Selah.* It is called *Maschil*, or a psalm giving instruction; and O that my fallings or failings, conflicts and storms, might but in the least contribute for this unto you; and let me say this unto you, O sympathizing and faithfully witnessing remnant in Scotland, in the mismanagements, failings or fallings of any of you, beware of seeking to palliate it, or to be satisfied if ye win at mens approbation, but seek a thorough sight and sense of it; and to be humbled in the presence of Him who is the only author and creator of true peace, and in the presence of his saints, whose sympathy is of great worth; and beg alone for your relief, to have a share in the blood of Christ, that merits peace. Endeavour to keep up a due sense of all the wrongs that the enemies of Christ have done to him and his, whether by right or left hand eneraics. Beware of tampering directly or indirectly with any of them, whether ministers or others, after the Lord has set up such beacons before you, and hath made so palpable discoveries of them and their ways, that any tender conscience may discern it. Beware of trusting to any stock of light or experience you have had or may have, for it may soon be exhausted, and without the Lord's new breathing upon it, may rather prove a snare than any other thing. Suffer not yourselves to be hurried or precipitate in going about the Lord's matters; but when you find yourselves so, feet a stand until you look about you. Look unto
the

the Lord for counsel, frame and assistance, until that ye find yourselves in case to lay yourselves and your affairs deliberately upon him: For, as all the honour we can put upon his Majesty, is our employing of, consulting with, and acknowledging of him; so nothing, nothing can offend him more than when he is slighted herein, and that especially in his own matters. Beware of debating of truths, merely as truths; but as the truths of Christ, and the field in which the pearl is hid.

Though I might insist on this, yet knowing to whom I write, I shall desist; only what I have written, I have done it as in the sight of God, for his glory, your vindication, and the information of tender consciences amongst you, who might be strangers to these things which my soul desires to be tender of, and to lay it upon you to be tender of them; and with no respect or design to answer the foul, lying, proud, malicious libels of the plotters and their confederates, John Haddow and the rest of them; who thinking they can fall on no better way to palliate their own knavery, smother convictions, &c. than under the pretext of zeal, tenderness and straightness in the cause; to see if they can give the cause a new thrust, divide and reproach the poor remnant. And as for that poor man John Haddow, if he were as well known to friends at home as to me, I would not be afraid he should be any snare; and that you may have a little hint of him, I pray you look on him before Bothwel, and you will find him embodied with Mr. Thomas Hog younger, and another whom I forbear to name, because dead; they pretended great zeal against the Indulgence, but alas! that was all, their practice otherwise being but very gross, which I shall but hint at in short. When great Cameron and these with him, were taking many a cold blast and storm in the fields, and among the cott-houses in Scotland, these three had for the most part their residence in Glasgow, where they found good quarters and a full table, (which I doubt not but some bestowed upon them from real affection to the Lord's cause) and when these three were together, their greatest work was, who should make the finest and sharpest roundels, and break the quickest jests upon one another, and to tell what valiant acts they were to do, and who could laugh loudest and most heartily among them. And when at any time they came out to the country,

whatever

whatever other thing they had, they were careful each of them to have a great flask of Brandy with them; which was very heavy to some, particularly to Mr. Cameron, Mr. Cargill, and Henry Hall: I shall name no more.

Look to him at Bothwel; so far from ever being reckoned as one of the honest party there, that he made there again a party of his own, *viz.* after our first onset at Glasgow, when we called a council of war, and examining what might be the cause that we were beat off there, it was condescended on, that one of the causes was our having that unhappy man Thomas Weir of Greenrigg amongst us, who was a trooper at Pentland, under the command of Dalziel against the Lord's people, without giving evidences of his repentance. Whereupon we called him before the council of war, but he after some high words, at last desired to be excused from giving his mind in it before the ministers came up. Whereupon he parted from us and went away to Mr. Barclay, and made his complaint to him, who received him heartily, as his General, and abused us highly for dealing so harshly (as he said) with him. So we standing to our point, Greenrigg, John Haddow, and Mr. Barclay made a party of their own, and declared they would be subject to none *, and he and they reilled through the country all that while, and came to and went from the army as they listed.

Behold

* Mr. Hackstoun of Rathillet in a long letter upon that subject yet extant, shews that this Greenrigg and some of his accomplices were more instrumental in the ruin of the Presbyterian army, than they could have been if they had been avowedly with Monmouth; and that when he and the rest of the companies came up from the bridge he found the army drawn up very well and in good order, and with good courage began their motion to go to attack these of the enemies who were come past the bridge; which appears to have been no bad conduct, if they had done it timeously before the whole force could be in a condition to fight) but immediately a cry arose through the army, that their officers were gone (*viz.* these gentlemen brought in by Messrs Welch, Howe, &c.) which put a stop to their march. Presently Greenrigg, &c. with two troops of horse, left their station in which they were before, and went to the front of the left hand body of the foot; — and on a sudden, (while Mr. Hamilton was reproving him and shewing him the danger of such a position, the enemies firing their cannon mean time) the whole two troops of horse, being about 140 in number, at their full length, tour in a rack, wheeled toward the body of the foot,

Behold him after Bothwel, and you will find him in England amongst the plotters and sectaries—a sectarian. One of his friends coming to Holland, brought with him a letter of recommendation from John as a person of great worth, who shortly after was detected in adultery, &c.

Look to John again at *Utrecht*, how he appears again under the mask of straightness, &c. Look to him again at Argyle's counsel table, hearing and applauding their Declaration, &c.

Behold him now, and ye will find him belching out his stomach against your poor persecuted brethren, and stirring his tail to break the pleasant remnant, and then he and his associates have gained their point; where I leave him †.

Truly all this is extorted out of me, from my soul's love to you and the precious cause of Christ, which I feared might be wronged through his subtilty. And what I write in this, as I have desired to eye the Lord in every sentence of it; so he knoweth that it is not from passion or prejudice, neither am I writing at random, being either eye witness to it myself, or well informed; yea I doubt not but there will be some amongst you who will know all or most of it. As I said formerly, had it not been for your vindication and truth's also, I had rather desired to have lien under the reproaches, than to have deigned myself to have answered such stuff: for I think it is long since. I got both my own cause and of enemies so rolled over on the Lord, that ever since, I have been so far from vindicating of myself, or being con-

foot, (standing there intire) and rode through them, treading them down, and forcing the rest to flee; who, together with the horsemen, brake and disordered all the troops drawn up behind for a reserve.—And he adds, whether this was done designedly or not, I leave to others to judge, and betwixt God and them.—Thus the whole left hand was broken, not by the enemy, but by these who professed to be friends, which inevitably occasioned the ruin of the whole army.—I think any who were witnesses might see the hand of God in making these who opposed the confessing the sins of the land, to be chiefly instrumental in the ruin of the whole army, &c. [This Letter was written in answer to a false information given by one of chief note, and sent to Mr. Robert M^r Ward in Holland.]

† This John Haddow was formerly a merchant in Douglas's. He got little entertainment amongst the societies while Mr. Renwick lived; but after his death, he by fair pretences came into favour with many, and was a Captain in Angus's regiment.

concerned with them, that their belchings are no trouble to me; and what wonder? seeing the Lord is so palpably taking his own cause, people and interest in his own hand, and vindicating all better than all the scribblings, vindications and defences of the whole world could have done it, (at the writing of this I desired again to lay myself before him, and again to protest before him, that this one attempt, which he knows was undertaken by me merely for his glory, the vindication of his cause and remnant, might not make him change his way with me).

O dear brethren, the work of the day is to be taking with guilt, to be cleansing our ways, to be clearing our accounts, to be laying our hands upon our mouth, lying, and living in the dust, valiantly keeping our ground, and employing the Lord to vindicate his own glory, cause and followers, and to wait on him who waits to be gracious; not seeking, but trembling to be delivered, until truth be delivered; not fearing enemies, but endeavouring to get them put in his hand: Their day is coming, and soe will it be. Thus I have given ingenuously a true relation of these two particulars relating to Bothwel.

As for that accusation they bring against me, of killing that poor man (as they call him) at Drumlog; I may easily guess that my accusers can be other but some of the house of *Saul* or *Shemei*, or some such risen again to espouse that poor gentleman's (*Saul*) his quarrel against honest *Samuel*, for his offering to kill that poor man *Agag*, after the king's giving him quarters. But, I being called to command that day, gave out the word, that no quarter should be given; and returning from pursuing Claverhouse, one or two of these fellows were standing in the midst of a company of our friends, and some were debating for quarters, others against it. None could blame me to decide the controversy, and I blest the Lord for it to this day. There were five more, that without my knowledge got quarters, who were brought to me after we were a mile from the place, as having got quarters,—which I reckoned among the first steppings aside; and seeing that spirit amongst us at that time, I then told it to some that were with me (to my best remembrance it was honest old John Nisbet, That I feared the Lord would not honour us to do much for him. I shall only say this,—I desire to blest his holy

name, that since ever he helped me to set my face to his work, I never had, nor would take a favour from enemies, either on right or left hand, and desired to give as few.

As for the considerable sums of money they alledge I received for the use of the suffering remnant in Scotland, not yet come to your hands.—As I cannot but pity that poor company's impudence and malice; so I cannot but admire the wonderful goodness of God in leading such a poor witless thing as me, in such a way as my innocency may be so easily vindicated, tender consciences so fully satisfied, and the reproaches of enemies so palpably discovered.

After I was sown and deserted by all my countrymen in Holland, and all pushing at me as a pest in the place and a troubler of their peace, foreseeing what was brewing amongst them, I was made to look about me, and to lay to heart, that in all these the Lord might be calling me to another place. So after some deliberation, I resolved to go to Hungary, to Talkie then in arms for the Protestant Interest; and though I found no liberty to join with them, yet my love to that interest was great. So I went to *Utrecht*, and amongst others to that great professor *Witsius*, for a recommendation, who dissuaded me much from it upon several considerations. Afterwards going to the *Hague*, through the advice of several persons of quality, I conversed with the ambassadors of the Duke of Brandenburg, Sweden, &c. But when I told how our cause was stated, and what was the discipline of our army in Scotland, and that if I went with them I behoved to have the same liberty over such as I might command, so that the laws of God might not be broken unpunished, &c. But they told me if I served their masters, I would be necessitated to leave my conscience behind me and take the cause as I found it; which if I would do they promised me great encouragement, &c.—Upon which several persons of honour, and some of them I believe truly godly, dissuaded me likewise from meddling with them. So after some tossing in my own mind, I retired, and desired to lay my case before the Lord, who I found did much countenance me in the time; and when coming out of the chamber, *Friezland* was cast in my mind, which I noticed little at first, till again and again it was borne in upon me; yet having no knowledge of the place, nor of any one in it,
I could

I could not understand what it might be. So I came into the house, and taking the occasion with some friends then present, to give them a more full information of Scotland's cause and wrestlings, yet I found *Friezland* still working in my breast, till I was forced to tell them of it, which with some amazement, looking upon one another, they all cried out, that was the place I behoved to go to, and they hoped it was of the Lord. So other friends of quality coming in, they all applauded the motion, and they promised to write letters of recommendation; which they did.

So returning to *Utrecht*, I gave an account of what had passed at the *Hague* to Professor *Witsius*, which he approved of, and told me that *Friezland* was the place.—Thus seeing so much of the Lord's hand in it, I embraced the occasion, and he immediately wrote a letter to the *Prince of Friezland* in my favour, and gave me another to Mr. *Brackel*.—So I came to *Amsterdam* to Mr. *Kooleman*, who told me he had received the letters from the *Hague*; and when I desired him to read the directions of them, he told me they were all, save one, to *Coccejans**, which although he made no scruple of, yet after parting with him, and taking ship for *Friezland*, there arose a storm in my spirit; that I should be carrying letters to such as were disaffected to the cause of God.—And after some tossings of this nature, I was made to take the Lord to witness, that as formerly he had made me ever averse from taking favours from any that were not of his way, and to bless his Majesty, that to this day I was so far from rueing it, that I desired still to be led in the same way, and that it was not myself, ease or livelihood in the world that I was seeking, but his glory and the good of his cause; so I desired that he might still keep me as a witness for him in all places he took me unto, and particularly to this place I was going to, whatever hardships, straits or difficulties I might be exposed unto. So I made a new surrender of myself unto him with my desolate case and all the ingredients of my cup, as forsaken of friends, acquaintance and countrymen, weakness of body through long and heavy sickness, and soul-exercise with my present straits, I not having

* This is a sect, so called, whose followers of one *Coccejus*, who denied the moral obligation of the fourth command upon Christians under the new Testament.

[This appears to have been in the year 1681]

to maintain me eight days longer, &c. Yet notwithstanding of all these, I desired to bless his great name, for holding me up and carrying me through so honourably, and that I was willing to serve him in the meanest employment, to beg, yea to die for him; and my desire was only that I might be for him and not for another, and to be kept from offending him, from sin, and from snares. I must say to his praise, I had a sweet time of it.

So coming to land in *Vanderwayn's* principality, who was Prince of Friezland, who was a great Cocceian, I past by *Franicker*, (to whom the most of my letters commendatory were) and went directly to Leewarden to Mr. Brackel, who I heard was an opposer of the Cocceians; who, when I came to his house was not at home, but I with the little Dutch I then had, shewed her that I had letters to her husband, and left her, (and as he told me afterward, when he came home, his wife informed him of the above-said matter, and he going to his closet alone, it was strongly borne in upon him that he should receive me into his house, and that I was one the Lord had sent to the place, and that he should be kind to me. So he returning from his closet, desired his wife to retain me still if I came again when he was absent. When I returned again, I found him within, and I met with unspeakable kindness from him, pressing me to lodge with them, which I did for the space of six weeks. After some conference alone, concerning the cause and case of the church of Scotland; he also gave an account of the case of their church, and of the great differences betwixt *Vanderwayn* and him, and the rest of the *Cocceians*. So I was made, not only to bless the Lord for directing me first to Mr. Brackel, but also to see myself engaged in conscience to witness against *Vanderwayn* and that party, as occasion should offer, cost me what it would. So I told Mr. Brackel of my design, and of my having letters to *Vanderwayn*: He approved of it, but withal told me, that it would not only cut me off from all expectations which friends had of my preferment in this court in Friezland; but might also contribute to render my abode in this place dangerous. I told him it was neither livelihood, life, security nor preferment that I so much looked after, providing I might but be honoured through grace to be a witness in my generation for Christ and his cause.—The next day I went to *Francker*, not only that I might exoner myself

at my friends hands at the *Hague*, but also exoner my own conscience. So coming to *Vanderwayn*, he sent for me early in the morning, taking me to a room alone, he told me of his greatness and moyen, and how he could advance me to great preferment, (which was true) but withal he said, that Mr. Kooleman was dealing very imprudently in opposing him in a great reformation; which I looked upon as a fair door to discover my mind. I said, I looked upon Mr. Kooleman as a faithful witness for Christ, against the errors and defections that were like to overwhelm the church of the *Netherlands*; which I found made him instantly weary of me; yet he promised to be my friend. Whereupon I left him, without seeking his favours.

The week following, Mr. Brackel trysted to his house several friends of the best note, and best affected in the place, to come and see me, to whom I gave an account in Latin (Mr. Brackel mean time turning it into Dutch to them) of the cause and case of the church of Scotland, which affected them much. At last they proposed a way how I should be maintained amongst them, and to give me cloaths and all things necessary, (of which I confess I was very bare) and that for the honour of the cause they would have me clad in the most fashionable mode, and a servant or two to attend me. I told them, their zeal for the Lord's cause, and sympathy with me was very encouraging, but I could not assent to their proposals; for as I was a witness and a sufferer (though most unworthy) for Christ; and as I had ever, so yet I counted it my greatest honour and glory, and most advantageous for his cause, to be like the condition my poor mother church and her children were in, who were so far from having superfluities, that they were reduced to the greatest straits; so I got them with difficulty dissuaded from it, and wholly to lay aside any servants for me, and only to take off such cloaths whose gravity and sobriety might speak forth my coming from a persecuted church: But I told them, that what they had been determining for me of that nature, they might have occasion to employ it much better on my poor persecuted brethren; and also, that it had ever been my desire to be a witness and contender for the Lord against all the sins of the place where I was, whether at home or abroad, which if the Lord helped me to do, (as it was my great desire he might) they would have enough to do to gain-

tain me sparingly, (which they then thought impossible, yet since they have often found it true) for as I heard there were many Cocceians in the land, and also multitudes of sectaries, against whom I desired through the Lord's grace to testify, in my station and capacity upon all occasions, and desired them to take nothing from any of them for my supply, otherwise, if I knew of it, it would necessitate me to cast myself again upon God's providence, and to wander through the rest of the world, before any out of God's way should have it to say, that they did me, or the persecuted people and cause of God a favour.

Vanderwayn coming afterward to Leewarden, enquired for me,—and said to Mr. Brackel, though he could not as yet advance me so creditably as he intended, yet he would liberally contribute for my honourable staying among them. Whereupon Mr. Brackel, as I had desired, told him my unfreeness to take any thing from Cocceians, looking upon it as the only testimony that I could for the present give against them. Which ye may think, he took not very well, and after that he nor none of that party ever owned me. As for the other sectaries I never had the temptation from them, they hearing what is related above.

After I was settled in Mr. Brackel's house, I laid out myself to the utmost of my power to inform them of the case of my poor mother church; and finding what acceptance it had amongst them, I sent home letters to you my dearest brethren, of all that the Lord had done for me, that so I might have your advice how to move most advantageously for your behoofs, though, as ye know, I had formerly but very small encouragement from that land. So all the six weeks I lodged with Mr. Brackel, I received not one stiver from him nor any other, all the money that was collected being brought in to Mr. Brackel, who bought cloths and other necessaries with it, as he did ever after, so long as he staid in this place: And when I went to Holland upon some business once, he gave me only so much money as he thought would bear my charges; of which I saved as much as I could out of my own belly, to give it to a suffering family then at *Utrecht*, (K——'s) who were little my friends then. My friends in Leewarden providing for me a private chamber, I staid there three months, and Mr. Brackel by my friends appointment, paid the charges out of the collected

collected money, which I managed so sparingly that I cast myself into sickness, &c.

My worthy brother Earlstoun's family coming over to Rotterdam, I was sent by friends with so much money as to bear their charges to Leewarden. When we came there, an house was provided for us; all the money for our maintainance was given in to Mr. Brackel, who gave it monthly, or quarterly to my dear sister Earlstoun, as he judged might soberly maintain us as sufferers indeed; and though, blessed be the Lord, there was enough of it, yet we had nothing to spare; as for me I meddled nothing with their money, neither got I any either from Mr. Brackel or any other. Thus we lived until my brother Earlstoun went to Scotland.

Shortly after, worthy Mr. Renwick's ordination falling in, and Mr. Brackel giving me a letter of recommendation to *Groningen*, and *Embden*, so I left *Leewarden*, and the poor family amongst strangers. Mr. Brackel giving me as much money as he thought would carry me to *Embden*, yet upon the account of my differing with him in the way of the ordination of Mr. Renwick, (as I wrote to you formerly) his allowance was so little at this time, that a friend in *Leewarden* sent after me a little more to help me; this was all the money I got from any soul in *Friesland*, except as I have told you from Mr. Brackel, coming to *Groningen*, and making ready for worthy Mr. Renwick's ordination.

In my way to *Embden*, having the occasion to speak with two ministers, (though strangers to me, yet laying out the case of our church to them) when I was gone they made a collection, and sent it to the minister *Philingsius*, in *Groningen*, and he sent it to Mr. Brackel.

When I came to *Embden* I laid out the church of Scotland's reformation, cause, and sufferings, unto them, all which they most affectionately accepted, offering to lay out themselves for your relief;—they desired that I, in company with one of the ministers would go to the country to their friends and lay out our case to them, that so every one of them might deliver the money severally to myself. Which overture I refused, telling them that if the cause itself moved them not, my presence would never do it. But I proposed that the ministers might lay it out before the people, and then that ever yone, as the Lord should move them, should bring

it in to Mr. *Allerdain*, the eldest minister, and that he should send it sealed to Mr. *Brackel*, or to me at Groningen; to which they condescended. At the same time also Mr. *Allerdain* wrote to his acquaintances in Rotterdam, to make a collection for you, and to send it to me, which they did, collecting three hundred Guilders, and not having a direction to send it to me, they went to one of the Scots ministers in the town, to get a direction, who desired that they might give it to him, and he should dispose upon it to sufferers: as for me, they said, and that party I was agenting for we were but a pack of murderers, and erroneous persons, &c. So this is another of the good turns, ye had by the plotters; also, the said Mr. *Allerdain* wrote to a minister of his acquaintance at *Bremia*, who sent eighty Ducatoons to Mr. *Brackel* for you, which indeed I never saw, nor knew of it, until Mr. *Brackel* was gone to Rotterdam, neither did it ever come to your hand. This was all the money that ever was sent to you or me from any foreign church, or person in the world, save *Emdden* and *Friesland*.

So returning to Groningen, (the time of Mr. *Renwick's* ordination drawing near) after some days there, the money came from *Emdden* as they had promised by the post, sealed: whereupon I took Mr. *Montandam*, who had the oversight of our students, and caused him to tell it, and I brought the money again sealed to Mr. *Brackel*, who told me that severals in *Friesland* had collected, and that all the money was to be brought in to him: and after all was got, it was told and sealed, and delivered over to Mr. *Renwick* and our friend *George Hill*.—Thus parting with Mr. *Renwick*, I thought to have rested my wearied tossed body with my dear sisters, and the family at *Leewarden*, but in a little time the news of my dear brother *Earlstoun's* being taken came to my ears, which necessitated my sister *Earlstoun* and me to part for want of money, being loath to put friends to unnecessary charges, and my other sister *Jean* took the charge of the family †, &c.

After

† Here he gives a relation of the way they lost the friendship of Mr. *Brackel*; which in short was thus. A congregation in Rotterdam being vacant, the ministers and people according to custom, nominated three godly ministers, out of which one was to be chosen, but the magistrates cast all the three, and influenced by the Prince of Orange, they without the consent of most part of ministers and people, gave a Call to Mr. *Brackel*, which
the

After Mr. Brackel was gone to Rotterdam, the few who remained firm friends to you, the poor family and me (notwithstanding of all the efforts of him and others to prevent it) brought in what they collected for the family to a worthy old gentlewoman's hand (as before to Mr. Brackel's) who hath taken the management of our family, and she gives it to my sister. And although, they be but few, yet are willing to contribute to their own straitening for maintaining us: But blessed be the Lord, who deals well with us, not only helping us to be witnesses for him in a strange land; but also in this, that we have no more friends than his cause and our dear brethren at home have; and that we are not obliged to any, but such as count it their honour both to suffer and sympathize with us, upon the Cause's account. As an evidence of which, when I was to print the Protestation against the Scotch Congregation in Rotterdam, I not having so much money in the world to pay it, yet I resolved it should be done; hoping the Lord would send me some little part of my dear sister Jean's patrimony; but one of our friends getting notice of it, begged of me but to have the honour to have so much hand in that testimony as to pay the Printer, which was ten or twelve Guilders; and afterward when I gave that person two or three copies of it, they immediately translated it into Dutch, and caused bind the history of the Indulgence, the Causes of the Lord's Wrath, and the said Protestation in one volume, calling it their *Vade Mecum*.

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Thus

the ministers of Leewarden refused to comply with, or to loose Mr. Brackel. But the Prince of Orange interposing his authority, at last they yielded; mean time, the people of Leewarden instigated Mr. Hamilton to deal for them with Mr. Brackel to dissuade him; which he accordingly did, both by word and writ, shewing by many arguments the evil of accepting of such a Call; which greatly incensed him against Mr. Hamilton, and for which cause, he set himself afterwards, to oppose both him and the Societies in Scotland to the uttermost of his power, and associating with the Plotters, (*viz.* Monmouth and Argyle) he warmly received, and entertained all their reproaches of the Societies, &c. and giving to them and their friends the money that had been collected in Brema, and Friesland, which was deposited in his hand, for the behoof of the suffering Remnant in Scotland, and the support of Earlston's family, &c. whereby Mr. Hamilton, and that family were reduced to straits, and also those who continued their firm friends. So dangerous a thing is it to oppose many men in such things wherein their worldly self-interest is concerned.

Thus you have an account of all the money that ever I had for printing either testimonies, or any other book, from any living; yea it is so far false, that I should have received money for printing the testimonies, that I think beside yourselves, I never spoke to any in the world of printing them, finding myself every way unfit for it, suppose I had money.

And when I went last to *Embden* upon your account, and having but a sparing allowance, I went most of the way on foot, about forty or fifty miles, carrying bread and cheefe with me for my support, lest I should spend any of the money collected for Scotch sufferers; and when Mr. *Alerdain* sent the last collection sealed for me, to *Leewarden* by the post, and with it, he sent to me ten *Gilders* unsealed, which also, together with the sum that was sealed, and the two hundred and fifty *Gilders* from six friends in *Leewarden*, I sent all home to you with our friend Robert ———, this I mention only to let you see what care the Lord hath had of poor me in that affair, he knowing well that I was to be reproached on this account.

In the mean time while I was waiting at *Leewarden* for the money from *Embden*, &c. the old Tyrant Charles wrote to the states of Holland, that they might send me, and some others over to him, which greatly troubled the land; yet amongst all my relations, and country men in Holland, there was not one wrote to me of my hazard, though it was public a long time, before I heard of it. Yet the Lord moved a great person in *Leewarden* to send me notice privately of my hazard, desiring me to retire out of the provinces, whereupon I resolved to keep myself privately in my own house, till I had got the money foresaid, gathered. But immediately I was again advertised by another person of quality in the place, that there were several English men in the town, and in the provinces, waiting to catch me, which greatly alarmed our friends, not knowing where to advise me to go, yet there was one person adventured to harbour me, in whose house I abode six weeks, in the cold winter, without fire, and often without light for secrecy, the one half of the family not knowing I was there. Thus I abode until the news of the Tyrant's death came, which made the enemies pack away, and I, through the Lord's goodness was liberate.

Now

Now, much honoured of the Lord, I have given you as in his presence a faithful account of all the money that ever I received, either upon my own, or your account since I came to *Friesland*: And as I desire to praise the Lord, and to rejoice that ever I was honoured to serve the meanest of you, in so honourable a cause; so all the reproaches that Satan and his instruments can cast upon me, (though alas, it is you, and the cause of Christ, through me they thrust at) I hope shall not make me repent, or hinder me for the future to serve you in the Lord's cause to the utmost of my capacity. I desire to bless and praise him for the way he has led worthless witless me in hitherto, and although now in a very poor and desolate case, yet I would not exchange my lot for the best of my enemies; but I look on persecutions and reproaches, my clouted shoes, and clouted coat, mean diet, and bare purse, which I bear for Christ's cause, as more honourable than all the rich buff, embroidered gold, and silver laced coats, with the vast sums of money, procured by Monmouth's and Argyle's men from sectaries, papists, malignants, and the indulged, and other enemies of the Lord's cause, at home, and abroad: with which (since their defeat) the limbs of Antichrist are now making themselves merry: Whereas, the little portion that the Lord honoured me to have a hand in collecting for you, every sixpence whereof (praise to his name) did bear a testimony for Christ upon it, and was made useful for his poor, little, naked, contemned, and persecuted flock; and, as I have told you, such was my desire to have the sympathy of the givers, proclaimed amongst you, and to have them included in your prayers, that I would never take a sixpence of it, for my own expences, yea though it might have been counted no wrong done to either you, or them, if I had sent dear brother *Earlstoun*, now so long a prisoner for Christ, and my dear sister, his bed-fellow, somewhat of it, without your allowance; yet to this day I was never able to send them a doit of my own; so I did never take the liberty to send to them a turner, nor the worth of it of yours, but left that to yourselves.

My dearest brethren, and fellow-sufferers for Christ, though I be loth to make a blowing-horn of my straits, lest enemies rejoice thereat, and blessed be the name of the Lord, I am far from repining, but rather rejoicing in my lot, yet to use a little freedom with you; the thing

that made us desire our friend Robert Spiers over, was that he might both hold in somewhat to us, and win something for our maintainance; for friends with the tears in their eyes have oft told us what straits they were in with us, and that they had with great difficulty got some oaths for us, but were not able to make them; so that Robert came seasonably to us, and is mending and sewing to us, ever since he came. Within these two days my sister was with our friends who told her the bitterness of all against you and us, and also the cause of Christ; and that the plotters since they came over to Holland are spreading the report, that the sufferings of Scotland now are nothing and that ye are in fulness of all things, and that I get great sums of money from you, and that thereby our family wanted for nothing which our dear friends said was so well believed in their lands, that they knew not what would become of us, and that it was very grieving to them, to see and hear it.

O loving brethren this is not to discourage you, not that I and the poor family are regretting our lot: no, Israel's portion is yet to the fore, a large and broad inheritance: But rather desire to glory therein, and to lay it on you to praise him for it, that thereby you, and we may be brought thereby to depend upon him the more closely, and may be kept humble under our honourable difficulties, this poor family having as many to own us as ye have, and both as many to own us as are owning the noble cause of our blessed Lord Jesus; O love the Lord all ye his saints, for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your hearts, all ye that hope in the Lord.

Dear Brethren just at my writing the last paragraph, I cannot but tell you of a strange providence shewing the Lord's kindness to, and care of you, and his cause.—The day after friends had been speaking to my sister, as I have told you,—I being met with them in a meeting that we keep every Tuesday, where I perceived them all to be much discouraged, and after the meeting they desired to speak with me, none knowing what was the matter save one of them, whereupon I desired to be excused, till I went home—I supposing that it might be some new plot against my person that they had heard, but I trusted to meet them at eight o'clock at night.

When

When I met them again, I found them all together, and more chearful than before, after sitting down, one of them with tears and joy, told me and the rest, what a wonderful providence of the Lord they had met with that day, wherein they could not but read much of the Lord's love as to themselves, so also to the poor Remnant in Scotland, in that the Lord in a wonderful way had sent them (not of their own ordinary rent, yet) for their own use, far beyond their expectation, a little sum of money, which they had dedicated, and would now propine the faithful Remnant in Scotland with it; which they said the very thoughts of had refreshed their soul that they could not express it, and desired that you might praise the Lord in their behalf for it, (this is the little portion you have now sent to you) although it be a small, yet it is a blessed and a great portion, every thing considered, the giver is a very young, yet a worthy zealous person. O mind them before the Lord, it is their desire and also mine they engaged me to keep their name secret. O how good is it to wait on the Lord in his own way, who waiteth to be gracious.

As to the Rotterdam Protestation, I desire to bless the Lord that ever honoured me, with you, to have the least hand in it, it being the only public testimony our poor church hath in a strange land. As to the irregularities, and irreligiousness which it is charged with by the plotters, this being but like what such testimonies of that nature and the instruments thereof are ordinarily charged with, may be the better borne, especially when we find it has so hit the nail on the head,—and wrought so kindly on the stomachs of the plotters, and all that side of the house, that they have ever since vomited much filth of their stomachs, that was never before discovered.—If they had mentioned in their libel, wherein the irreligiousness, and irregularities of it consisted—it is like I might have shown you my mind, as in other particulars: But finding it but an impudent, and naked assertion, I cannot fight with the wind.

But as to the second Article, wherein ye write to me, that they alledged they were wronged by us, in mentioning their lies, treacherous dealing, aspersions, reproaches and misinformations, which they would have freed themselves of. It is true, it might be well answered that take in all the ministers in *Cumulo*, with the *&c.* that is at the end of it, which takes in all the ministers that

that came to that place and were embarked with Rotterdam, viz. the indulged plotters, &c. and it will be very easy to any to see that they are so far from being wronged, that the half that might have been said against them, is not inserted: But if nothing less will serve Mr. Langlands and Mr. Barclay than probation.

I answer, 1st, Whether or not, was that treacherous dealing in Mr. Barclay (to pass by other things) at that time when great Messrs Cameron and Cargill were in the fields, carrying Christ's standard over the mountains of Scotland, not only to refuse to join with them in the work of the Lord, but to come into Galloway with several others, commissioned from their brethren for that end, and set up his tent as near these two witnesses as he could, upon a pretext as being one with them, and so crying out against the indulgence, calling it a *well busked Jaded*, &c. thereby to draw poor things off from the other two: and when the people flocked to him, imagining that Messrs Cameron and Cargill, and he were one, then took occasion in private to oppose them and their faithful witnessings, and to condemn withdrawing from the indulged, or any other of the ministers.

2^{dly}, Whether or not, was that treacherous dealing in him, that before he deserted his own parish, in Stirling shire and the poor persecuted Remnant in Scotland, for him to go through the land to those places and persons, whom he knew were disaffected to all public preaching and faithful witnessings, and offering the gospel to them (to be a sponcer to his own practice, and to make him the more acceptable where he was going) and then to come over immediately to Holland, with such a bad report of that land, spreading it among strangers, and others, that he had gone from one end of Scotland to the other end of it, and there was none that would receive the gospel off his hand. If this was not treacherous dealing, let all unbiaised persons judge.

And further, when he was come over, he and Mr. Langlands and Mr. Thomas Hogg younger, after many horrid misinformations to Mr. Kooleman formerly, went again to him pressing him to write in all haste to Mr. Brackel, then at Lecwarden to stop Mr. Renwick's ordination, which Mr. Kooleman obeyed, and wrote in all haste what dreadful accusations these three forementioned ministers, with the rest at Rotterdam, had against you; and withal told him that these three ministers were to be

at his house the Wednesday after, to draw up the libel they had against you, and to subscribe it, and send it to Mr. Brackel; whereupon Mr. Brackel wrote to me immediately a short line acquainting me of it, the true copy of it in Latin I have sent you, and when he came to Amsterdam to Mr. Kooleman's, and waited all day, the three ministers came not, but at night sent their apology that they could not come that day, by reason that their information was not subscribed by all the ministers, some of them not being then to be found, but that they should send it with the next. So, when he returned, he wrote to me in all haste another letter to Groningen, with a little account of their aspersions, the true copy whereof I have also sent you; but before it came to my hand the ordination was past. When I returned to Leewarden, Mr. Brackel told me there were other articles they had dispersed against us, beside those contained in the letter; but because I cannot prove them by witnesses (as they say) I shall not insert them.

Now, whether this will not make out treachery, lies, &c. and counteracting the godly in their lawful endeavours,—I leave it to the Lord and to tender consciences to decide. I wonder these men did not put us to prove these things sooner, when worthy Messrs Cameron and Cargil were in the fields, or when Mr. Brackel was one with us; perhaps then they thought by our moyen at home and abroad, we would have got too many to witness for truth and against them: But they'll wait until I be deserted of friends abroad, and a party of you at home engaged for them, or well jumbled, and then they will bid us prove. But alas! the blue marks of their practices in all places where they come, are sufficiently proving, and crying against them.

Look at home, who are the most active enemies, and most calling in question the faithful wrestlings, contentings, testimonies and heroic sufferings of the poor remnant at home? Is it not they and their confederates? Or go abroad, and see who is most prejudicate against you? Who is sowing discord betwixt you and your friends who were once valiant for you? See who is most embittered against you and the Lord's cause, as now stated in that land, and against any that would lay out themselves for you, and you will find that it is that party of the plotters and their confederates. Alas! though they may for a time thus dally with God and men, and say,

Behold

Behold we know it not: doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth the soul, doth he not know it? and shall he not render to every man according to his works?

But supposing these three men had been innocent of some things inserted in the protestation, yet I could not grant that the writing of these sins *in cumulo*, was either irregular or irreligious, especially considering them as embarked in one ship, carrying on one cause and steering one course together, though not all alike expert in that. What more ordinary in the scriptures, than for the Lord to charge home *in cumulo* the sins of a land or of a church, upon the whole, they not witnessing and contending against the same, even though not all actually guilty, See Deut. ix. and Ezek. xxii. in that long catalogue of Judah's and Israel's sins, the Lord charges the city, the prophets, the priests, the princes and the people's sins *in cumulo*, and verse 29. and 30. he says, *I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, but I found none: and yet there were at the same time (chap. ix.) found sifiers for all these abominations,* (which that party are so far from that they will neither acknowledge nor mourn for their sins) and also we see in many examples in scripture, the Lord threatening and plaguing *in cumulo*, as in the case of Achan, and David's numbering of the people, Saul's slaying of the Gibeonites, &c. and our blessed Lord threatens Jerusalem *in cumulo*, Mat. xxiii. 37. although there were not a few therein of his own people, who consented not to the counsel and deeds of his enemies.

Now my very dear Friends, I hope ye will pardon my prolixity, being so far contrary to my own design when I began, yea, and in a great measure extorted from me, that if it had not been singly for the glory of God, (so far as my weakness would allow) and the vindication of his cause and followers, I would never have condescended to it. I have also endeavoured to manage every article I have mentioned, that any who please to back-trace me, may come to the knowledge of all the steps, wanderings and fighting circumstances contained in this information.

Dear friends, you cannot but see what an high stage you are set upon, as it were to be a mark for all sorts to shoot at, *Set forth last, as it were, appointed to death,*

death, to be made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. But thanks be to God which giveth the victory thro' our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

As to the account you sent me of your wrestlings with that disaffected party of ministers and others; I think the Lord hath nobly helped you, and has discovered his rich grace towards you, with the rottenness of these men's principles and practices, helping you to keep up the good old cause on foot. O! be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day. And since ye are so fairly parted, beware of further meddling with them, until ye see another work on them, which I fear is not much to be expected, for as yet I see nothing among them but a contemning and burying of the faithful wrestlings of the poor remnant, a vindicating of their own proceedings, a subtile endeavouring to have you linked in one chain with them, and divided and broken amongst yourselves, and dreadfully loading with reproaches, both at home and abroad, such who have their hands at the work of God.—O! I say, as ye love your peace and the favour of God, stand afar off from such. When I look through their last proceedings with you, it brings their woeful proceedings at Bothwel fresh into my mind. It is the same cause they are now carrying on.

As for further libellings and pamphletings of theirs, reject them, otherwise ye will find they shall never have an end, until the Lord take them red-hot in their plottings and politics, and discuss the controversy himself: O pray, pray that he may hasten to do it.

I would also beg of you, not to put your princely Master in the common of any out of his way, who are opposing or refusing to embark with you in your faithful wrestlings, as it has been the ruin of many of this generation, and also disparaging to the glory, honour and cause of your noble Master; and far contrary to the practice of the noble hero Abraham, who gave a noble testimony against such peevish, covetous and hateful politics, telling the king of Sodom, (no enemy nor back-sliden professor) that he would not take from a thread even to a shoe latcher, neither any thing that was his,

lest he should say that he had made Abraham rich. Abraham let him know that the Lord, the Most High GOD, the possessor of heaven and earth, was engaged for him, (who is also engaged for you) he kent full well, that such sort of bodies were very ready to call their thread a web, their shoe-latchet a Nout's hide, and their any thing, how little so ever, a vast treasure, and that Abraham should be obliged to him all his days for it. O be tender of the Lord's glory, as it has been the trick of all the enemies to gain their woeful purposes, and very fatal to, and hath tongue-tacked many a valiant hero for Christ in our day. *Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

I had almost omitted Mr. Langlands answer to the 6th article of the Rotterdam protestation, wherein he would vindicate joining with that congregation, by alledging that after *Rathillet* was debarred from the communion, Mr. Hamilton communicated there, and Mr. Cargill preached and gave the communion that very day that *Rathillet* is said to be debarred; so that the scandal, (as he says, if there be any) lies at our door. To pass by other answers that might be given, I shall give you the true relation of it. Mr. M'Ward on saturday night before the Communion sent for me, and told me that church's design of debarring *Rathillet*, which I did much resent in the time, and went immediately and told Mr. Cargill of it; but he, with other friends, though resolving to resent it, yet could not determine on such a sudden to withdraw from the church, this being the first step of their ever appearing against us; for ever formerly they had owned and joined with us in all the testimonies that ever had been given in our land, yet we went to Mr. John Hog (who was then their only minister after Mr. Brown's death *, Mr. Robert Fleming not being then come over) to see what was the cause; who told us, that the elders had done it without his advice, and thereupon gave out tickets to Mr. Thomas Douglass to give to *Rathillet*, whereupon that great witness for Christ would not accept of it: yet then we could see that there was a
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* By this and some other things it appears to be a mistake that ever Mr. M'Ward was a settled minister in Rotterdam, altho' he had his residence much there, and often assisted while his dear brother Mr. Brown lived, who was minister there many years, excepting the time he was forced to retire to Utrecht, upon the account of hazard from England.

ny cause of scruple for us to join with them at that time. But the reason, as I understand; that it is inserted in the protestation, was, that immediately after, Mr. Fleming coming over, and faithful testimony being given against him, and the church of Rotterdam not only espousing his plea, but cast at all the faithful testimonies and late wrestlings of our church, involved themselves with the Monmouthian party then on foot, and in persecuting, reproaching, &c. the remnant and their proceedings at home and abroad, and adhered to the deed of the elders against Rathillet.

As to the charge against the ministers who ordained Mr. Renwick, I refer you to Mr. Linings and the bearer's information. If I have omitted any thing, I expect ye will let me know.

Now, much honoured and pleasant remnant, my earnest desire, and my last desire in this letter shall be, that ye may be helped, and kept following the Lord fully and singly, laying aside every weight, that ye may run with patience the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of your faith, considering him that endured contradiction against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.—Alas! there has been too much looking after multitudes. Christ's flock is a little, little flock; boasting in somewhat without and besides Christ, has cost us dear; O that we might be wise at last, neither looking to persons nor parties, pretend to what they will, but as we see them following and imitating him who was holy, harmless, undefiled;—and hath called us to holiness, to be holy in all manner of conversation, built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Holiness becomes his house and servants; and such will the Lord honour to follow him in his conquests, in tumbling down Antichrist and all his enemies, (Rev. xvii. 14.) who are called, chosen and faithful. And whatever men may pretend to by their policy, associations, boastings, learning, parts, &c. where holiness with these is wanting, never expect a good turn from them; and where this is, whatever other outward advantages are or may be amissing, yet be far from contemning them—because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men; For ye see your calling brethren, that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

But God hath chosen the foolish things to confound the wise, and the weak things to confound the mighty, that no flesh should glory in his presence.—Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. The only wise God strengthen you with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.

Yours in all duty in his sweet Lord Jesus.

ROBT. HAMILTON.

December 7th, 1685.

The two fore-mentioned Letters from Mr. William Brackel containing the accusations of the forementioned minister against the societies, were brought home by Colin Alison and presented to the following meeting, which were attested by Thomas Lining and him, giving it under their hands that they were true transcripts of the originals written in Latin :—Whereby it evidently appeared that the copy they had before was a true one, which the foresaid ministers said was stuffed with lies, &c. †

As to that which was desired in the letter to Mr. Hamilton, *viz.* to deal with the Presbytery of Groningen, to answer what was laid to their charge by the two foresaid ministers, &c. Thomas Lining and Colin Alison went and conversed with severals of the said Presbytery, and others, concerning these things; an account whereof being drawn up and subscribed with both their hands, Colin brought home and presented to the following meeting; a true copy of which follows :

A true relation of the answers which the ministers in the Netherlands, to whom we went, gave in private conference to the two first accusations given in against them by Mr. George Barclay and Mr. Robert Langlands.

First, WE went to D. Gordema, minister in Leewardan, who told us there would be no Presbyteries in Groningen,

† These Letters being in Latin, it is judged unnecessary to print them here, as the contents of them are related already.

ningen till the winter was over. And after reading the letters which we shewed to him, he rehearsed to us the formal way of their calling and ordaining of ministers, which was thus : First, the Presbytery did nominate a great number, out of which, the next day of their meeting, they choose twelve, the third day they choose out these, six; the fourth day out of these they nominate three; and this gradation they use for decency and deliberation : Then if the minister be to come to a city, they send some of their number to the magistrates to tell them that one of the last three nominated the people are to choose as their minister; and therefore they must receive the minister chosen by the people as a citizen; after this the people choose, and the Presbytery ordaineth.—To this *Professor Marck*, when we went to Groningen, added, that in some places of the country, where there were gentlemen or heritors, they had the privilege of nomination or presentation of the person to be examined or ordained, which is the same with our laick patrons, under which our church groaned until the year 1649. Also, the Professor said that it was the burden of the godly, under which they were groaning, and which they opposed as much as lay in their power. Also, he asserted, as to the second member of the proposition, to wit, Deposition of ministers, or sending them a *pair of shoes*, (as these above related ministers asserted) that it was a mere calumny, and was never practised, no not the least shadow of it †; For, said he, private discipline, or exercise of church censures, was left to the church untouched by any whatsoever.

Item, D. Gorcema told us of two examples, which confirms what is said. The first was, a minister chosen and placed according to the foresaid order, which the magistrate of that place where he was to be minister opposed; yet the people stood to their choice, and the Presbytery also allowed the same, because the magistrate had nothing to say against the said minister's life and conversation, yet for all that the foresaid magistrate persisted in his opposition to the Presbytery and people : Whereupon the Presbytery were forced to complain of that violence to the *Novem viri*, or deputies of *Friezland*,—who commanded

† See Mr. Renwick's 49 Letter, page 169. where he shews his information that Mr. George Barclay flatly denied this charge afterward, although it could be proved by a multitude of witnesses, that he did indeed assert it.

manded the foresaid magistrate to desist from his opposition, and let the church enjoy her privileges. This was an example of right administration.

The second was, that the people had chosen one of three (this was in another place of the province) and the magistrate opposed the minister chosen, and would not admit of him, but would have the people to choose one of the other two, which were in the list. The people upon this complained to the Presbytery: But the Presbytery, many of them being men led by corrupt affections, yielded to the magistrate's desire; yet not without opposition by these of the Presbytery that were more straight, whereof D. Gorceina was one himself. He told us this as an example of mal-administration; but particular examples of mal-administration, make not a church *pure Erastian*, as these ministers asserted: Yea, when we came upon the like head with *Professor Marck*, he called it expressly, persecution.

A third instance *D. Abringa*, minister at Groningen, told us of *Phelingius* elder, when lately he was called to Rotterdam, the magistrates of Groningen would not suffer him to go away, and discharged the Presbytery to give him a dimission; yet because their command was groundless, they gave him a dimission.

Now consider the Erastian principles, which are,

First, That the Christian magistrate hath his political power and office of magistracy derived from Christ as mediator, head and redeemer of his church; and therefore must rule and govern the church as Christ's vicar, and is by Christ the head of the church, sent and instituted. *Secondly*, That church-officers have no power nor authority to censure scandalous persons, whether ministers or others, with ecclesiastic authority, distinct from civil punishments.

Thirdly, That ecclesiastical power is not distinct from the civil.

Fourthly, That church officers have only power of administering church-discipline, because the magistrate has laid that care and burden upon them, as his deputies, as not being himself sufficient to exerce both offices,

Fifthly, That ecclesiastic power is not given to church-officers, *jure divino*.

Sixthly, That the Christian magistrate as such, is properly a church officer.—This is the character of a church *pure Erastian*, for which ye may see Gillespie's

Aaron's rod blossoming; and so we leave it to your wisdom to apply the foresaids, and then bring forth judgment accordingly.

As for the second accusation, to wit, *Trine aspersum*, or three sprinklings in baptism; all with whom we conversed, said that they constantly taught publicly, that whether one or two, it was indifferent as to the nature of the sacrament and that they; never knew one in all their churches that taught otherwise. Likewise they confirmed this by their carriage toward the French churches, who use but one sprinkling, though in the same city with themselves; for they shew themselves as well pleased with the French external form of baptism (which also is ours) as they do with their own.

Lastly, Professor Marck said, if the letters had been to himself, he would have answered them immediately, But we desired him, seeing there were to be no meetings of the Presbytery these three or four months, he would write a line of true information, which he almost condescended to do.

Then we went and delivered the letters to *D. Mathias*, the eldest minister, and he promised to present them to the *deputati-classis*; and that they should do, *totis conatibus*, for the persecuted church.

After that, we went to *Pbelingius* younger, and came over all these things with him, and he further confirmed all these things foresaid; so they all spake the same things severally, which is a great confirmation of the truth of them*. He also asked where James Russel was? We told him at *Francker*; at which he wondered that he who was so strict should study under a Cocceian.

We

* The Reader will be pleased to understand, that there was need for all this care and circumspection, as these before-mentioned ministers and many others who took part with them, had, (as is before related) and still continued to calumniate the church of Groningen, (under the name of the Hollandish church) that thereby they might render Mr. Renwick's ordination and ministry odious, and by all means in their power, labouring to make poor, tender, simple people believe, that by hearing or having their children baptized by him, they were guilty of all the horrid things wherewith they charged the church of Holland. And none were more servid and furious in this than Robert Cathcart, Killtears, &c. in which they were too successful for a time, until their scandals, lying and laxness in other things, made them lose much of their former credit and reputation. See Shields in the life of Mr James Renwick Page 76, 77, 78, --96.

We told him that it was an ordinary thing for unstable men to float from one extreme to another, to which he assented.—Then he told us how James behaved to depart from Groningen, on account of his irregular marriage. He also asked what Mr. Flint was doing, we told him he was sometimes preaching, and sometimes not, and that Thomas Ruffel, had been with him also preaching; he wondered more at that, that Mr. Flint, whom he had heard so stiffly oppose the Cocceians, should own Thomas Ruffel, who both studied under them, and had nothing for ordination, but a testificate from some Cocceian ministers; This also professor Mark declared, that he had no more than Mr. Flint had, which was a bare testimony of his studies.

These things we thought fit to collect, that thereby serious and tender souls might be satisfied, and more confirmed in the truth, and the falsehood of these assertions made the more to appear.

These things are true, as witnesses, our hands, written, and subscribed at Leewarden, the 1st of December, 1685.

Sic Subscribitur,

THOMAS LINING.
COLIN ALLISON.

WHILE the popish and persecuting powers being solicitous, where to lay this *Cockatrice-egg* which under the warm wings of the following toleration hath been hatched into maturity for an unhappy production, did see it for their interest to contract their oppressions, and not to extend their severity so promiscuously, and universally against all that bear the name of dissenters,—they thought fit for prosecuting their design to liberate many gentlemen and ministers of the indulged faction, out of prison, and multiplied their favours toward such as they found pliable, and of greatest figure, by which they projected, and did wofully prevail to advance the mystery of iniquity and to stop the mouths and bind up the hands of such, from whom they might have expected controul or contradiction, at least by way of a testimony, in such a clear case of confession, and lay them by, now blinded with flatteries, and bribed with favours, from all open opposition to Popery, twisted with slavery, in the present

sent design of Antichrist. So that among all the Presbyterian ministers in Scotland, there was no public testimony against Popery, and the open efforts to introduce it.

But however, the persecution was not so incessant, yet still their rage did many times exert itself in bloody murders of such as they could catch of the wanderers; several of which they butchered in the fields where they found them, and others on scaffolds, and in filling prisons with them, while the enemy had no other to persecute and pursue but them. Yet their greatest difficulties and discouragements were from professed Presbyterians, who had been formerly persecuted themselves, and who sided themselves with the foresaid ministers, some of these persons came to the General Meeting, which met at *Trierminion* upon the 28th of January, 1686.

An account of what was done therein, with relation to these persons, being drawn up after the Meeting. I shall here set down.

UPON January 28th, 1686, Alexander Gordon*, John Dick†, and some others came to *Trierminion* asserting that they had Commissions from the Societies in the shires of Galloway and Carrick, and some of the Societies in Kyle. Where their procedure was after this manner:

These who had written Commissions were desired to produce them, but the foresaid persons having none, but by word of mouth, were desired to remove a little. And in their absence we spoke our minds anent these supposed grounds, whereupon they, or at least, those who were embodied with them had built great accusations against us; and after calling of them, that which was spoken in their absence, was rehearsed before them: As

(1.) Our minds were declared about the first Call given to the ministers, shewing that it was not now owned, as to the title, and many of the contents of it.

(2.) With respect unto the engagement to secrecy; which was once amongst us, shewing that the misapplying thereof, contrary to the intention of the first penners, and all the abuses thereanent, were acknowledged, and a day of humiliation kept for the same.

F f

(3.) An-

* This Alexander Gordon laird of Kilsteurs, was afterward a bitter reproacher.

† John Dick, also, who afterward was a dragoon to hunt the rest.

(3.) Anent some expressions in our first declaration^s at Sanquhar, and Lanerk (about which, many have raised debates) shewing what way we understood these words; and declaring that we never looked upon ourselves as a formal judicatory, whatever some draweth from the expressions therein, but declaring we relied not from these our declarations.

(4.) Anent the protestation against the Scotch Congregation in Rotterdam, desiring the second article to be considered distributively, applying not all the charges to every one of the ministers singularly, but what every one was guilty of unto himself, and so that there was no falsehood in these charges; but withal acknowledging too much bitterness in several expressions.

(5.) Anent the charge of laying impositions on ministers, declaring that we were against all impositions on ministers, and will desire nothing but what is antecedently bound upon them by the divine authority of God in the scriptures, and the ecclesiastic authority of our church constitutions; so this is no imposition.

(6.) Anent searching and trying of scandals, express in one of our papers; shewing that we understood not a judicial trying, but private and popular, by way of information, that we might the better know our duty, how to carry towards the persons.

(7.) Anent the nature of our General Meeting; declaring that these meetings, as they were neither ecclesiastic, nor civil judicatories; so they are of the same nature with private Christian societies, seeing that in them, Christian sufferers in this time of extreme persecution, do meet together, in their General Correspondence, for advice and consent, about the duties of our day: And that in these meetings we proceed not as a judicatory, making acts and laws, but as a selected meeting of Christians, for promoting the work of God in our stations and capacity, proceeding by way of counsel and determination.

(8.) Some things were declared which we judged not to be sufficient grounds of separation: Such as 1/3. What is determined only by a man's own private light, and discrete judgment. 2. Infirmities. 3. Circumstances never reformed, nor doctrinally condemned by our faithful ministers. 4. Such controversies as being no parts of our attained unto reformation, overturns not the word of our churches testimony, against Papists, Malignants, Sectarians, and Backsliders. 5. No scandal
con-

confessed and forsaken, but our mind is more fully declared of all these things, in our Informatory Vindication. Howbeit it is to be advertised, that our minds, as they were then declared, were the same with what they were always, as to these things: Which (in some measure) may be also evident from some things in our conferences with the foresaid ministers the preceding year.

After which, Mr. James Renwick shewed the causes of his going abroad to seek ordination, and the case of these ministers, by whom he was ordained; and read the foregoing paper subscribed by Thomas Lining and Colin Alison, in vindication of these ministers from the charge of erastianism, superstition, &c.

Then these who were particularly sent from the several societies, in their respective shires, did nominate a number from among themselves to speak, that confusion might be avoided: But there was at this time no modelled meeting, for as we never choosed a preses of authority, so there was no preses for order here elected: seeing this meeting could be only for conference, not for condescending upon any conclusions. Therefore it is false which was informed at this meeting, *viz.* that Mr. James Renwick was preses. And in what followeth, we proceeded after this manner.

(1.) It was asked at Alexander Gordon, John Dick, &c. who had not been at our two preceding meetings, whether they were to concur with us as formerly, or not? To which they answered neither freely, nor positively, but that they were so, for ought they knew.

(2.) A letter was read*,—after which the foresaid persons were desired to declare their minds, whither they owned that letter, or not; and though none of them did own it, yet they were not free in disclaiming it. Again, it was asked whether or not they had been instrumental in spreading it? And this they denied; though the contrary was known of some of them: It is to be noted, that these persons being embodied with the author of the said letter, gave occasion to ask such a question.

(3.) Every one who was nominate to speak, was desired to give his mind anent the declaration of Argyle, and

* This letter was one Robert Cathcart's, an abstract of which is insert in Mr. Shield's Life of Mr. Renwick, page 88, 1096. as also answers thereunto. Which might be pertinently subjoined to the count of this conference.

his party, as it is complexly taken, which we disowned. But the foresaid persons were not positive anent it, alledging other senses might be put upon such places as we objected against, than the words themselves seemed to import,—we told them that no man could be hindered to be the interpreter of his own words, yet the practice of that party, and the expressions of some of note amongst them, did put no other meaning than ours upon these articles.

(4.) They were desired to declare their mind anent that general conclusion amongst us, *viz.* ‘ That nothing relative to the public, and concerning the whole, should be done without the consent, at least the knowledge of the whole, which we do all agree with.’ But the foresaid persons rejected it, calling it an imposition. But we answered that it was no imposition: for if a part, proponed to the whole, the doing of a necessary duty, and if they sinfully denied their consent or concurrence, then that part might do it for themselves, without breach of the foresaid conclusion.

(5.) It was asked, what was thought of breaking that conclusion, and drawing up, and consulting with other parties, and calling of ministers, against whom their brethren had just exceptions without their knowledge or advice? which we looked upon as no small breach of union.

But the foresaid persons, (1.) Alledged that they did not call, though they did hear these ministers before our conferences with them. (2.) They spake against the foresaid conclusion; saying that by it they might not hear a faithful minister when occasion offered.

Their first answer was repelled, as an evasion; and for freeing the conclusion of the charge of being an imposition, we explained it to the purpose of what is insinuate above, and to make it more clear, added some few caveats. As,

1. That it is not taken in absolute sense, as a restriction simply necessary for all times, all places, all persons, all cases, and things.

2. The conclusion imports, that even in necessary duties, which concern the whole, a part ought not to go on therein, without proponing the same to the rest. And if these shall sinfully deny their concurrence, that part may lawfully, and without breach of the conclusion, do it for themselves. *Quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus tractari*

tari debet, that which concerns the whole, ought to be handled by the whole.

3. As for points doubtful and controverted, this conclusion imports an orderly and rational method for advising, and deliberating anent matters in controversy, and so we look upon it as a hedge against precipitancy and rashness, helpful for the preservation of union, preventing of confusion, the curbing of petulant spirits, and the right managing of affairs; so when according to this conclusion, a right method in deliberation about such matters is followed, then we choose that which we judge agreeable to the law, and the testimony. And added, that before they had drawn up with other parties, and called such ministers, they should have known if their brethren had any just exceptions against them. And if they had none, and yet denied their concurrence and consent, the foresaid persons had been free to do as they did, without violation of the conclusion.

(6.) Then the exceptions that were given in against the ministers with whom we had the conference, before related, were read over, but in a more succinct method, than they are in our relation, and so every one of us, nominated to speak was asked, whether or not, they were clear to call them, while these exceptions stood? To which we all answered, that we were not clear for the same. But the foresaid persons reckoned these exceptions not to be valid.

(7.) It was asked at the foresaid persons, whether or not, they were clear to join with us in general, and particular fellowships, now when they had heard us speak our minds so freely? But this they refused to answer unto, putting the question back to us, whether or not, we would join with them in these meetings?—After a little deliberation, it was concluded to answer positively by refusing to concur with them in such meetings. So in proposing the question, these two caveats were premised. 1. That the question was not to be about joining in family exercise, or such like occasional meetings; so this was not refused by the answer to the foresaid question. 2. That we answered not in the name of our societies, but in our own names, having no commission nor direction from our societies for that effect. Then the state of the question that was proponed was this.

Considering, *1st*, That the foresaid persons, are neither plain, nor free, in their answers to the preceding questions

questions of so great concern.—*2dly*, That they have broken the brotherhood, by drawing up, and consulting with other parties, (who in the mean time were laying heavy things falsely to our charge) without our knowledge and advice. *3dly*, That they have sided with some ministers in points of disagreement, against us, and called them, and were yet clear to hear them, even while our exceptions against them stand unremoved. so it was asked, considering these things, whether or not, we were clear to concur with the foresaid persons in General Meetings and Societies? whereunto our answer was; That upon the foresaid considerations (altho' other things might have been name!) we were for that time clear, not to concur with them in the foresaid meetings. Which, when the foresaid persons heard, they cried out, It is because we are clear to call faithful ministers that they will not join with us; but we denied such a charge, and when we were speaking to them about the foresaid reasons, they would not stay to hear, but suddenly and abruptly departed.

THIS *Robert Cathcart* had pretended, at least to join in contending and suffering for the same testimony with the societies in *Carrick*, and professed cheerful and cordial adherence thereunto, upon all hazards; which for a time he seemed very resolutely to sustain, until the expedition of the Earl of *Argyle* appearing, he began secretly and openly to bear hand to the breaking of these societies, and to shew, either much unstableness, or that he but dissembled in ever pretending to be one with them, whom now he relinquished, and studied by all means to traduce. Which first appeared in a letter, accusing and representing Mr. *Renwick*, and those that joined with him, "As such, whom the Lord had given up, in a great measure, to the delusion of their own deceitful hearts, to believe lies, and follow the dictates of an erring conscience; whom the Lord in his anger, hath plagued with misinformed judgments, that they persevere in the breach of our solemn known covenants in two points,

"*First*, In that of error and heresy: For, (1.) With the papists, they would have their church infallible; their practice testifies this, in declining a minister, be he never so faithful in his function, for the least alleged personal failing, even though that which is al-

" ledged

" ledged cannot be made out: Surely, had these men
 " lived in the days of the apostles, they would have re-
 " jected them too; for they had their own failings, a
 " *body of death.* (2.) With the Independents, upon the
 " least failing in a minister, they take upon them the
 " power to depose. I think (says he) they needed not
 " have troubled the church of *Groningen* with the ordi-
 " nation of their *Rabbi Mr. Renwick*; they might as well
 " have ordained him themselves; ordination being as
 " much in their power, as deposition. (3.) In very lit-
 " tle they differ from the Separatists.

" *Secondly,* In that of church discipline and govern-
 " ment, they have altogether broken that, as (1.) Their
 " sending over a youth, scarce read in the common
 " heads of divinity, to *Groningen*, a most corrupt church,
 " never yet come the length of prelacy in its reforma-
 " tion, having declined the faithful ministers of the
 " church of Scotland, and set him up in their room, as
 " *Jeroboam* the son of *Nebat* did, when he made idol
 " calves, crying, *Behold thy gods, O Israel!* so did they
 " of him, *Behold thy representative, O church of Scot-*
 " *land!* I can call him nothing but a creature of their
 " own making, and an idol whom they have set up in
 " the room of the honest ministers in Scotland. (2.) By
 " their meddling with things which only belong to a
 " church judicatory, and the highest church judicatory:
 " Not only being laick-men, they examine faults, yea
 " absolve the guilty; but also, constitute laws and make
 " acts, which none but a General Assembly could do.—
 " Must the gospel live and die with *Mr. Renwick*, sup-
 " pose he were a minister of the church of Scotland?
 " Must we be all tied to him? But a minister of the
 " church of Scotland he is not; neither can he be ad-
 " mitted to sit a member of a church judicatory in Scot-
 " land: For, the church of *Groningen* had no more
 " power to ordain a minister of the church of Scot-
 " land, than the clergy of England had long ago to con-
 " secrate *Sharp* Archbishop of *St. Andrews.*" With
 " much more odious stuff to this purpose, discovering more
 " malice and ignorance, than either wit or ability to sus-
 " tain his charge, and bewraying the contagion of that
 " plague to have infected his own heart, tongue and pen,
 " which he alledges they were smitten with, whom here
 " he studiously belies; yea, and somewhat worse than an
 " erring conscience, believing lies; even a feared consci-
 " ence,

ence, dictating lies in hypocrisy; which in his own experience with them, he knew to be lies.

Mr. *Renwick*, and those with him, did indeed confess and lament their breach of covenant, and wished their brethren with whom they contended, and particularly these ministers, whose faithfulness he so much proclaims, to have been more sensible of their own breaches of that covenant, which then they had forgot, and now they have forgone in silence; And, upon these terms of mutual confessing and forsaking the breaches of that covenant, they always declared their desire of uniting with them: But, because they persevered in the breach of that covenant, not only in two, but in all its parts and articles: Therefore they found themselves obliged to discountenance them, while they continued in so breaking it. In the first article, *being so far from endeavouring the preservation of the reformed religion in doctrine, worship, discipline and government*, that they have complied with or connived at many things ever since of, and destructive unto that reformation; as the supremacy in the former indulgences as well as in the present toleration: The oaths and bonds inconsistent therewith, some of which were taken by some of them; some again connived at, and not witnessed against by many of them; the cess and other impositions and exactions, expressly required for the suppression and destruction of that which they were sworn to endeavour to preserve. As likewise not only in lying-by and surceasing from endeavours to preserve it, when they left off preaching and discipline, in times of the peoples greatest necessity; but also, in disseminating other principles, and justifying other practices, than are consistent with the doctrine and government of the covenanted church of Scotland, *viz.* The doctrine of association with malignants and sectaries: The doctrine of owning and maintaining tyrants.

In the second article, *Being so far from extirpating popery, prelacy, &c.* That many of them have made their peace with declared papists; all have owned the head of papists, the great pillar and promoter of popery: and instead of extirpating prelacy, have complied with, or connived at such courses, as conduced in the contrary to establish it: As hearing the curates, paying them stipends, &c. In the third article, *Being so far from preserving rights and privileges, &c.* as there qualified; that not only many have subjected themselves to

an *Erastian supremacy*, to the prejudice of the true religion, and the liberties of the church and kingdom; or connived at it without a testimony: But also, all have owned allegiance to a destroyer of religion and liberty; without respect to the covenant-qualification, in the *defence of religion and liberty*. In the fourth article, Instead of discovering malignants, &c. they have many of them countenanced them, associated with them, strengthened their hands, admitted them to the Lord's table, &c. And all have owned the authority of the head of them, mounted on the throne of iniquity. In the fifth article They have broken our conjunction, in firm peace and union, in truth and duty; and instead of that, have been promoting and abetting a sinful confederacy in defection. In the sixth article, Instead of assisting and defending all their covenanted brethren; many have added affliction to the afflicted by reproaches; and have been for maintaining their murderers with supplies of exactions, contributing thereunto: And many ways have suffered themselves to be divided and withdrawn from their suffering brethren, and have made defection to the contrary part, and given themselves to a detestable indifferency in the cause and testimony of Christ. And in the conclusion, Instead of mourning for these breaches of covenant, they yet defend or daub them. But,

As to these breaches, charged here on Mr. *Renwick*, and the people with him: However, they confess manifold breaches, they deny these. And in these charges, the inadvertency, at least, of this accuser, is so manifest, that it cannot escape the observation of the impartial: How, in making lies of them whom he would accuse, he belies also all these with whom he would have them classed; or, ignorantly misrepresents them. For, *First*, The papists never pretended that every one of their doctors or laicks were infallible; as this dictator alledges of these men, both teacher and taught. Neither did they ever assume, or improve this kind of infallibility here charged, of declining ministers for the least alledged failing. He knows who are like the papists in that, in following ministers hand over head, and allowing them as it were an *indelible* character: Whereas, the men he accuses, have been so far from pretending to infallibility, that they have not declined to publish their resentments and confessions of their mistakes to the world; which is a greater testimony against all pretences of infallibility,

than those that contended against them ever yet professed; though *with them, even with them*, there have been found some *sins against the Lord their God*; But that error they will not confess, nor can they ever be convicted of it, that ever they declined a faithful minister for the least alledged personal failing: They have declared the contrary in their *Informatory Vindication*, Head IV. page 80, &c. If they had been living in the apostles days, as they could not have found such disorders to discountenance; so, in case they had, they would have been obliged to follow the apostles practice and rules, they would not have called *John Mark*, when the apostle thought not good to take him along; because, *he went not with them to the work*. They would have joined with *Paul* in their capacity to withstand *Peter* to the face, when he dissembled. They would have said, even to as good a minister as *Archippus*, *Take heed to the ministry*, &c. That would not have been looked on as an imposition on ministers in the apostles days; neither would that have been thought in their days sinful separation, to mark those who caused divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine received, and to avoid them. And to withdraw from brethren walking disorderly.

(2.) He belies the *Independents*, in alledging, they take upon them to depose ministers for the least failing; they will disown that. Mr. *Renwick* did ever abhor, that people should take upon them to depose ministers for any failing, the least or the greatest; nor did ever allow people, so much as to withdraw from ministers upon the least failing; but upon such scandals as did bear the weight of withdrawing according to scripture rules: they had reason and necessity to trouble the church at *Groningen*, not to make a *Rabbi* of him; but from the power they had received of Christ the common head of the church, to ordain him a minister of the New Testament; seeing they could neither have clearness in point of duty, nor confidence in point of success, to seek or obtain ordination for him, from the ministers at home (that were then far to seek, and ill to find) except they should have resolved to lose what they had wrought; to destroy what they had built; to condemn their own sufferings, and contradict their own contendings. And they did always disclaim all power, either of ordaining or deposing of themselves.

(3.) He

(3.) He does not say, wherein they either agree or differ from the separatists. There were never such separatists in the world as he makes them, that did depose ministers for every the least failing. What separation Mr. *Renwick* was for or against, may be seen in the above mentioned *Informatory Vindication*.

(4.) If he had been such a youth, scarce read in the common heads of divinity; he discovers himself very ill read in them, when he calls this a breach of church-government, to send such a youth to a foreign University, to be fitted for ordination in the ministry; or, to send him first to be fitted, and then after trial to be ordained, by a reformed sister-church, found in their own and not contradicting our testimony, when ordination could not be had at home, without the breach of several standing constitutions of the government, yea without yielding to several corruptions threatning the dissolution and perversion of the whole of it; yea, without bowing to some of the calves *Jeroboam* had set up: For, without bowing or subjecting himself, either to the idol of prelacy or supremacy, or at least, to complying with, or conniving at the bowers thereunto; or, without some way of homologating subjection unto the land-idols of jealousy, established and encouraged by a power, and for an end equivalent to and correspondent with that of *Jeroboam's* supremacy, he could not have gotten ordination in Scotland at that time. The comparison may seem odious between *Jeroboam's* calves, and the corruptions and defections of ministers in our day; yet it seems more pertinent and apposite than to say, the declining of these corruptions, and calling and countenancing a minister, witnessing against the altar of *Jeroboam*, and crying to the generation, That they have forsaken the God and covenant of their fathers, is like *Jeroboam* setting up his calves. It is like, this gentleman, if he had been living in *Jeroboam's* days, would have said as much against that prophet, that cried against the altar at *Bethel*, and would have condemned him as much for arrogancy, in refusing conformity with the priests and prophets, in these days; especially if he, being a young prophet, had not hearkened to the kind counsel of the old prophet that entertained him, as now he hath done to Mr. *James Renwick*. However it is a lie, that the church at *Groningen* never came the length of prelacy in its reformation; except it be said, that they were never so far corrupted, as to de-

cline to prelacy since their reformation. And it is another lie to say, that ever Mr. *Renwick* was called representative, &c.

(5.) They whom he accuses, never examined faults, nor absolved the guilty, in a way belonging to any church judicatory; nor in a way not competent to the meanest private person, lad or lass, in the kingdom, being only in a way of Christian and charitable inquiry about the truth of reports, in order to exhort, admonish, reprove or approve, and that they might know how to carry towards them: Nor did they ever make any laws or acts, but such as any two or three in society might make by common consent, to determine one another as to duties or dangers: Nor did they ever say or dream, that the gospel should live and die with Mr. *Renwick*; but that they were content to live and die with him in partaking of the gospel ordinances, dispensed by him, whom they esteemed a faithful minister of the church of Scotland; and worthy to sit as member of any church judicatory therein. The church of *Groningen* did not make him a minister of the church of Scotland; but they ordained him a minister of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of God; a minister of the church universal (which is the primary relation of all ministers) a minister in any church, whereof he was a member, and so consequently in Scotland; and a persecuted people in Scotland called him to be their minister, whereby he came to have as good right to be a minister of the church of Scotland, as Mr. *Rough*, Mr. *Knox*, and several reformers, who were not ordained by the ministers of Scotland: Yea, as any, who now these twenty five years, have been appropriate to particular flocks, though not by fixed ordination by ministers. And therefore, the difference between the church of *Groningen* their ordaining Mr. *Renwick*, &c. and the clergy of England their consecrating *Sharp*, as in many respects it is vast, so in this, it is as great as between a reformed church ordaining a faithful officer of Christ's kingdom, and a deformed church consecrating a knave, no officer of Christ's, but of antichrist's kingdom.

These scurrilous invectives heaped together in this lying libel (which I have the longer insisted on, that the writer hath been so much applauded and blown up into a conceit of himself for it, and even by some who were obliged by office, as well as duty, to have checked him for

his arrogance, ignorance and impudence discovered in it) might have been thought nauseating to all that should read them. Yet the subscription being torn away, and the Writer's name concealed, it was spread and read through the shires of Air, Galloway, and other places, and copies multiplied through many hands, only carefully providing that none should be given or lent to any therein accused. Many poor people, not knowing who was the author, took it to be written by some minister who was much concerned and had great understanding in these debates; and thereupon were much commoved and perplexed with fears and doubts, that by their partaking with Mr. Renwick, especially in baptizing their children with him, they had made themselves guilty of the sins of that church by whom he was ordained; and were hereby so exercised, that some of them were cast into a fever. At length the Author being discovered, people thought not so much of it. Afterwards, notwithstanding the people in Carrick, who formerly had countenanced and entertained him, were now much alienated from him; and this Mr. Cathcart and others, were turned avowedly opposite to him.

These unpleasant debates and contendings being at an end, and the persons with whom they had the same, being gone from the place; the meeting having met, there was read before them a part of Mr. Hamilton's long letter to the Societies, which Colin Alifon brought home with him, who returned a little before this meeting. At some things in which severals were dissatisfied; But it being long, was not all read, the rest being left to another time*.

Likewise, there was a letter from Mr. John Flint read, wherein he earnestly desired a conference with some of our number. Whereupon the meeting resolved that Mr. James Renwick and Mr. William Boyd, with any other whom they should choose, should be desired to go and converse with Mr. Flint. According to this resolution, in May thereafter, Mr. Renwick being at Edinburgh, had conference with him, a short account of which being

* See this more fully in Mr. Renwick's 43 letter, page 134. where he advites him, when writing to the whole, to write as to such some of whom may be his greatest reproachers the next day.

ing drawn up, I shall set it down, after I have related what was further done at this meeting.

It was agreed upon and appointed by the meeting that a day of fasting and prayer should be observed by the Societies, to search out the causes why the Lord permitted us to be so broken and divided amongst ourselves; and also to lie under such sad and heavy reproaches and misrepresentations. A particular time was not concluded upon, but it was left to every society to make choice of what day they thought most convenient.

And it was appointed, that the next General Meeting convene at *Blackgainoch*, upon the first Wednesday of *April* thereafter.

UPON the 28th of *May*, Mr. James Renwick, minister of the gospel, James Wilson, William Nairn, James Ingles and Michael Shields being then at Edinburgh, it was thought expedient to give Mr. Flint notice that in answer to his desire, they were willing to meet with him, to know what he had to say, (this was done rather lest he should take occasion to boast, that we would not, yea durst not give him a meeting, than from hope to gain him) and to answer the desire of the General Meeting, Jan. 28th, above related.

Mr. James Renwick spoke to him to this purpose, That the Letter which he sent in winter last, to our friends, was read at the last General Meeting, and well accepted of by them; in token whereof they desired him, when he should have the occasion of going to Edinburgh, and Mr. Boyd, with any other they should chuse, to meet and confer with him: But now, seeing Mr. Boyd was not there at the time, he did not look upon it as a full answer to our friends desire, otherwise he would have given him more timeous advertisement; but Providence having trusted them to be there, he had sent for him, that they might in so far answer their friends desire, and desired to hear what he would say. Mr. John professed that as he had several times desired a meeting, so he was glad to have the opportunity of one, but would have wished to have had more time for deliberation: To which Mr. James answered, That he could have wished for that also, but seeing it was thus ordered, and the time of their being together could not be long, (Mr. James being to preach that night) he desired
him

him to come to the point, and speak of the differences betwixt him and us: So he began with this:

1. That while they were students at Groningen, Mr. James had written a letter to Mr. William Brackel, without Mr. Boyd's and his knowledge and consent.

2. That he went on in his ordination without acquainting Mr. Boyd, which was dissimulation.

3. That our delegate Mr. Robert Hamilton, had given lying informations of the remnant to strangers.

To the first, Mr. James answered, That the said letter was but a private letter, about a particular business and not relating to the public, and therefore not their concern either to know or have their consent thereto.

To the second, That he knew well enough at that time there were differences betwixt Mr. Boyd and them, and some exceptions against him. [To this Mr Boyd assented.]

To the third, Mr. James said, That Mr. Hamilton denied what was alledged against him, and the contrary was not yet proved; and giving, but not granting that he had so informed, as he said, How could that be charged upon us?—At this time, Henry Love, (who came with Mr. Flint) began to speak somewhat; whereupon Mr. James desired him to hold his peace, for he should not be suffered to speak, being under scandal. About this time Michael Shields said, That we did not meet with Mr. John as a minister, neither did we look upon, but denied him to be such.—Upon which Mr. Flint, in anger, repeated his former accusations, adding, “That they had confounded church and state together in their meetings.—Had overturned our declarations in paying of customs,—and that they obstinately held and maintained the idolatrous names of the days of the week, and months of the year.”—After he had done, Mr. James answered to his first accusation as is already related; and to his additional accusations viz. That we had confounded church and state, &c. Mr. James answered to this effect, That we altogether denied this, neither could the same be instructed against us, but was a calumny cast upon us by our antagonists: For we did not, nor do not look upon our meetings either as civil or ecclesiastical judicatories, but only as meetings of Christian sufferers, acting jointly and unanimously, adhering to our ancient laws and covenanted work of reformation, desiring to know the duties of our day, that

so in our stations we might keep up in this land, according to our power, the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was objected by Mr. John, That Mr. James did sit in our Meetings.

To this it was answered, That he never sat as a member in any of these meetings, but only gave his advice in matters as a minister of the gospel.

As to the overturning of our declarations, &c. it was answered, That this could not be instructed, for we heartily adhered to them.

It was objected by Mr. John, That Mr. William Boyd said to him, that we relied from some things in them. To this it was answered, That if Mr. Boyd said any thing amiss concerning them, he could only do it for himself, and not in our name, for he had no commission from us for that effect.

It was asked at Mr. John, If he looked upon our declarations as authoritative actions, published by persons invested with authority? He answered, He looked upon them as published by a poor suffering party, reduced to their primitive state, adhering to our covenanted work of reformation, founded upon the laudable and ancient laws of the kingdom. To which it was replied, That we did the same; the publishers having the authority of the law, but not of the judge.

As for the customs, we would not defend the paying of the same, yet we did not look upon the paying of them to be a ground sufficient in itself of separation from persons, against whom we had no other exception, either as to matter of judgment or practice.

To the last, *viz.* the naming of the days of the week, &c. it was answered, That we did not defend the naming of them, and heartily wished the same were reformed, yet we did not look upon the simple naming of them as a sufficient ground of separation from any person, neither did we think this time of our broken and confused state fit for reforming the same, we having greater and weightier matters to be exercised with; and as Mr. Durham says, 'Nothing should be done but what is for the good of the church.'

It was objected by Mr. John, That the reformation of them was both necessary and easy to be accomplished. To which it was answered, That we did not see

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the absolute necessity of it at this time, neither such an easy thing as he said.

It was further objected by Mr. John, That the naming them was contrary to scripture, as Psal. xvi. 4. Hof. ii. 16, 17. To which it was answered, That these scriptures had a relation to the not worshipping of idols, and not to the simple naming of them, otherways they should be contrary to some other places of scripture, where the names of idols are mentioned.

It was asked at Mr. John, Whether James Ruffel his joining with and studying under Cocceians was sinful or not? To which he refused to answer.

Moreover, it was asked at him, How he would reconcile two of his letters written to us, in the first of which he had commended us at an high care, and in the other, he had cried us as far down again; whereas, at the writing of both letters we were one and the same? To which he refused to answer, until he saw his letters.

THOUGH it was sad, that enemies were making great advances in order to accomplish their design of introducing Popish idolatry in this land, yet it was somewhat promising-like, that there was in the interval some small witness and testimony given against it by the boys in and about Edinburgh, and some others, of whom no such thing was expected. Against these the cruel enemy kythed their malice, in causing some of them suffer even unto death, and punishing others by scourging and imprisonment. This, as it demonstrated the cruelty of the adversaries, which as it was severe and implacable against any who manifested the least dissatisfaction at their wicked courses, so it is not to be passed without observation, that when many were silent whose place and office called them to speak and appear against Popery, that then even boys, &c. should be stirred up to shew some dislike of the same.

But in the mean time, these enemies did not forget their great eye-sore, the west country; but continued in persecuting them, and especially the United Societies, whose trials and afflictions at this time were many; for beside the heavy hand of the bloody adversary, the tongues and pens of severals were bent against them, they were loaded with reproaches and misinformations, especially by Alexander Gordon of Kilsteurs, one who had formerly appeared very zealous for the cause for which they

were suffering, but had broken off and had joined with these ministers who came over with Argyle, whom the Societies had no clearness to hear, as is related before, who with Robert Cathcart, &c. were at no small pains to spread reproaches and misinformations, not only at home in this land, but also accounts were sent to Ireland, and informations sent to Holland and turned into Dutch, that the means they had used had proved so successful, that all had now left Mr. Renwick, but about a hundred *poor, silly, daft bodiēs*, that were now running through with him and robbing the country, &c. Their activity in this work was great. Alexander Gordon fore-said, went to Bass and Blackness prisons with some papers, (wherein were sad and heavy misrepresentations of the societies, drawn up, as was supposed, by some † of whom better things were expected) which he shewed to and left with these ministers that were in the said prisons and a person who knew nothing of it before, coming in to visit some of the prisoners shortly after Mr. Gordon had been there, got a copy of these papers, which was brought to the General Meeting, which met at *Black-gannoch*, upon the 7th of *April*, 1686.

AFTER prayer and modelling of the meeting, there was read before them a letter to some ministers of the Bass, subscribed by William Lockhart and John Dickson, whereof Alexander Gordon was the bearer; and two papers the one intituled, an information against Mr. Renwick's party, given in to ministers; and the other an account of the conference at *Frierminion*, *January* 28th, 1686. (a true account of which is already given.) In both these papers there are many gross falsehoods and misrepresentations of persons and things; such as, That Mr. Renwick was Preses in that meeting at *Frierminion*; — That they have arrogate to themselves the government of both church and state, and the management of both civil and ecclesiastical affairs—by the same persons and assembly;—That they have constitute themselves into, and assume the title of a Convention of Estates;—and have acted accordingly, in a legal authoritative deposing of the late King, rescinding, cassing and annulling all the acts and statutes made by him since the year 1660. They next expatiate upon some things in the first call to
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† VIZ. The fore-said ministers Missrs Barclay and Langlands.

the ministers, altho' they knew that the same was soon refuted from, and several things in it retracted and condemned by the following meeting, (as is already shewn) and although severals of them (particularly Kilsteurs) were principal agents in, and managers of that call.

Finally, they say, that the very cause for which the society-people refused to join with them, was, because of their ambiguity in their answers in the foresaid meeting at Frierminion, and because they own it as their duty to call and hear such ministers as have owned and do own and adhere to the true received principles of the church of Scotland, founded upon the written word of God, and whatsoever declarations and testimonies, former or later, particular or more general, are agreeable thereto.——

The hearing of these papers was not a little affecting to the meeting, not only upon the account that the societies were so sadly misrepresented in the same; but also that they were so misrepresented to some ministers for whom they had a great respect, and of whose sympathy they desired to be sharers.

But although the consideration of these things was very heavy and grievous, yet the conscioufness of their being innocent and free as to the most weighty charges cast upon them, was helpful to them under the same. And any who will be at the pains to consult the Informatory Vindication, (printed after this) and the account of the proceedings of the last meeting, (related before) will clearly see how sadly they are wronged.

The meeting, after deliberation concerning what was their duty in reference to these papers, did resolve and think it expedient that Mr, James Renwick, Mr. William Boyd, George Hill, James Wilson and Michael Shields, should be desired to draw up a paper containing a vindication of our principles and practices, in answer to the most material of the accusations and misrepresentations contained in the informations given in against us; as also, a true relation of the conference at Frierminion, and bring it to the next meeting, that they might consider the same.

Though this work was both unpleasant and troublesome, yet the same was judged necessary in order to vindicate themselves and the cause they owned from these false charges. This was the rise and occasion of writing

our Informatory Vindication. But before it was printed, it was more than once revised*.

It was also, at this meeting, resolved and appointed, that every member of this meeting should acquaint and desire the respective societies from whom they were sent, to provide themselves of arms, and to bring the same with them when opportunity should offer to hear the gospel, and also to General Meetings for their own and their brethren's defence.

The occasion of this resolution, was, that several persons had of late become slack and remiss in this.

And it was appointed that the next meeting should meet at *Auchengilloch*, upon the first Wednesday of *May* next. This General Meeting was appointed to meet the sooner, that the emitting of the vindication might be hastned,

THE ENEMIES went on still in their wicked designs to introduce Popish idolatry, and inflave the nation; and for effectuating thereof, they endeavoured to get Papists advanced to places of power and trust. But the penal statutes, which are the legal bulwarks of our religion, which incapacitate and exclude all Papists from the least of these places, standing in their way, they resolved to have these removed; and for that effect called a Parliament that met in *April*, to which the Earl of Murray was Commissioner: In which they were disappointed (beyond what was expected, considering what men that drunken Parliament were) as to the taking away of the Penal statutes, upon account of which they were soon dissolved. And contrary to all law, by virtue of the usurped absolute power, several Papists were advanced, not only after this time, but also before it. In the mean time, the west country and several other places wanted not persecution and trials; and in particular the societies had several difficulties to grapple with, and among other things the reproaches cast upon them, and misrepresentations of their proceedings, as is before related.

WHEREFORE, according to the appointment of the last meeting, a draught of a paper or vindication was brought

* Mr. William Boyd having the principal hand in drawing the first draught of it, occasioned it to need the more revising. But proving unsatisfactory, it was afterward transcribed and altered by Mr. James Renwick. See his 45 Letter, and his Life page 88.

brought to this General Meeting, which met at *Auchengilloch*, upon the 5th of May, 1686.

After prayer and modelling of the meeting, the vindication was read in part; but in regard it was long, and the place inconvenient at the time to stay in, it was thought fit to go to some house. Accordingly the meeting having parted that night, convened the next day, before whom the said paper was read, and some things helped in it. But the further consideration thereof was thought fit to be referred to another time.

In the mean time, it was appointed that the 20th of May should be observed by all our societies a day of fasting and prayer unto the Lord, that he would give light, counsel and direction how to do and what to do in the affair concerning that paper of vindication, and that if it be not for his glory and the advantage of his cause that it may be crushed and not permitted to come any further: But if it be conducive for these ends, that he would countenance and bless it, and that he would take the management of that affair in his own hand.

It was appointed that the next meeting shall meet at ———, upon the first Wednesday of *June* next.

ALBEIT the cruel enemy had endeavoured much formerly to debauch and insnare the consciences of people by wicked oaths and bonds; yet as not being weary thereof, in the interval betwixt the last meeting—and this, there was a Bond called the Bond of Regulation imposed by many noblemen and gentlemen upon their tenants in obedience to an act made in *Queensbery's* parliament, and some caused it to be insert in their tacks; by which the takers obliged themselves to live regularly, keep the kirk, and refrain from conventicles, &c. which in the enemies sense, was, not to withstand but stupidly to comply with whatever was imposed. To this (alas!) many yielded, though others were helped to refuse it, and chose rather to suffer than to sin. In the mean time, (though not many of the wanderers had this temptation, being put from their possessions before, yet) they wanted not their share of other trials and persecutions of the time, which (to the praise of free grace) did rather animate than cool their zeal, and stir them up to diligence in duty. But one thing was very afflicting and heavy to bear, *viz.* the reproaches cast upon them not only by enemies, but even by those who should have been

being strengthners of, and sympathizers with them in their afflictions, from which they endeavoured to clear themselves, and vindicate the cause by publishing a Vindication, which was again brought to this meeting, which convened at ——— upon the 2d of June, 1686.

WHERE, after prayer, and modelling of the Meeting, the Vindication was again taken to consideration: But the further revising of it, was thought fit to be delayed a little.

Mr. William Boyd being at this meeting, and having an inclination to go out of the land: But desiring to know the Meeting's mind therein, and to have their consent thereto, proposed to them, what they thought of his going abroad to revise his studies*; And desired to know if they would give him a testificate, in order to his ordination where he could lawfully have the opportunity to obtain it,

The Meeting after deliberation, resolved that an answer could not be presently given him. Wherefore it was thought fit that every one of the Commissioners should be desired to acquaint the Societies they came from, of the same. And that a day (*viz.* June 10th) for supplication and prayer to the Lord, should be observed by them to seek light and counsel what to do, and how to do in that affair.

As also that another meeting should be appointed upon the 24th of the same month, at *Auchengilloch*, unto which, these who come, should bring with them the mind of their Society in that matter.

ACCORDINGLY a meeting did convene, (day and place foresaid) to which Mr. Boyd having come, he declared that (with respect to what they were about concerning him) it was not his resolution at the time either to seek, or take ordination, albeit he should get the opportunity to obtain it lawfully, but only to go abroad for revising his studies†. Though his declaring this to be
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* It is here to be observed that he finding his draught of a vindication was not acceptable, wanted by going abroad, to shift for himself, and shun it.

† His dissimulation in this, appeared afterward, and as some accounts bear, he had then obtained a testificate from some of the ministers who were opposite to the Societies, in order to divide them amongst themselves, in which he was successful. See more of him in *Renwick's Letters*, *viz.* 44, 45, 54, 55.

his end and design in going out of the land, helped to clear some persons in the meeting, as to their giving of their consent to his going abroad; yet there being some differences betwixt him and severals in the societies, it was thought fit to speak of them at this time: Accordingly there was fundry things signified to him by several persons, which had been offensive. Whereunto he answered particularly; which did in some measure satisfy the meeting. Whereupon he, at the meeting's desire, giving it under his hand, in a paper called his testimony, that he was in one judgment with the societies, as to the controversies of the time, and that he did not leave them through any dissatisfaction at them, or to disjoin from them; they thought they could not refuse to give their consent to his going abroad, only in order to revising of his studies, nor to give him a testificate of christian carriage while conversant among them, which being drawn up after the meeting, was delivered to him, who not long after this went away.

The Meeting further resolved that a letter should be written to Mr. Robert Hamilton, in order to know how it was with Mr. Lining, who was with him in Leewarden getting the benefit of learning from a minister in that place, desiring him that if Mr. Lining be found qualified, that he would lay out himself to procure his ordination. Which letter being written was sent: Whereunto, not long after, Mr. Hamilton returned an answer. A copy of the letter follows.

Much honoured Sir,

THIS is amongst our greatest complaints, the want of the preached gospel, in a powerful manner, and plentiful measure; and the case of our land seems to be so now, that if there were but some few ministers to concur with us, and plenissh the country, they might thro' the Lord's assistance be instruments of very much good. For there is not only a general willingness, but also a great longing and anxiety amongst people, thro' very much of the country, to hear the gospel: So that we may say, it is with us as in Isa. xli. 17. *The poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst.* Whatever the Lord purposeth to bring out of it, there is now a more earnest desire after the word, than we have observed formerly amongst the people:

Yea seemingly the threatenings and cruelty of the enemy would not much terrify them from following of the gospel, from mountain to mountain. And also how confirming and comforting would it be to the people? and what a mean would it be to wipe off some of our reproach from amongst men, to have ministers concurring together, seeing with one eye, and speaking with one mouth, working with one hand, and lifting with one shoulder. O cry mightily to the Lord that he would supply with help in this case. We doubt not but these considerations will have great weight with you.

Hence we desire *1st*, to know if Mr. Thomas's master looks upon him to be in any tolerable capacity as to literature for subjecting to ordination. And if not, we would have him go to the University of Groningen, and are willing to maintain him there for a season. Also let us know your own thoughts, if the Lord be fitting him for the work: *2^{dly}*, We desire to know if you have any just exceptions against him, that will bear weight, and if so, to acquaint us with the same. But *3^{dly}*, If there be none, and if he be at the time fit, we desire that you will lay out yourself to the uttermost of your power, for a valid, and lawful ordination of him, with as great expedition as possible.

However we desire previously to know who are the ministers by whom you expect him to be ordained, and where they are standing, that our consciences may be satisfied anent them, and we may timeously give our consent. As also we would be previously acquainted (if the Lord shall be pleased to carry it through) with the time of his ordination, that we may keep some days apart before the Lord upon that account.

So praying that the Lord may direct and assist you in that affair, and may strengthen and comfort you in all your combats for his precious truths, and may help you to behave in the midst of the generation, so as you may have his testimony, and may grant you grace to persevere unto the end. We remain,

Much honoured and dear Sir, Yours, &c.

Subscribed in our name, at our appointment,

JUNE 24th, 1686.

By MICH. SHIELDS.

To

To this Letter Mr. Hamilton returned answer to this effect, that all doors abroad seemed at this time to be shut for Mr. Lining's ordination. And as for his going to a Colledge there, he writes, that he would be for any thing that might be to Mr. Lining's encouragement. Nevertheless the colleges being accompanied with so many snares and so little advantage he could see he would have by them, he having already (as his master had informed him) made sufficient progress in his studies; he could not advise to it, but on the contrary judged it every way fittest, that he were amongst the societies, which might serve more for clearing of them as to what they designed concerning Mr. Lining, than it was possible for him or any man to judge of while there. And though he was not for his going to the University of Groningen, nor to that of Utrecht, yet he wrote that in the mean time he should want no encouragement that he could either give him, or make for him.

It was likewise resolved by the Meeting that a letter should be written to Mr. Lining; which was accordingly done. The tenor of which followeth.

S I R,

WE think you are not ignorant how the Lord's vineyard in this land stands in great need of labourers, there is such a general anxiety in people thro' many shires, to have the word truly and faithfully preached unto them, that would draw forth hearts that were not obdured, to pity their condition; and we hope you are not unwilling to put to your hand to the work of the ministry, for the conversion and confirmation of souls, and the advancement of the Lord's precious though controverted truths, as he shall open a door for your sending forth.

Therefore we desire *1st*, That ye would signify unto us by writing, your concurring with the present stated testimony, and that ye are still of the same mind, as to what you have expressed in your testimony, for the further satisfying the consciences, especially of these amongst us, who are not acquainted with you.

2^{dly}, If you find yourself in any tolerable capacity for subjecting to ordination, that you presently seek after the same in a valid and lawful way: But if you do rationally apprehend any unfitness at the time, which a lit-

the more literature would help, we would have you taking some public college at Groningen, and we are willing to maintain you there. But

3dly, Before ye subject to ordination by any ministers, we desire that you will signify unto us what they are, and where they stand, that our consciences may be satisfied anent them, and particularly what case the Presbytery of Groningen is now in, and a more full clearing of the foul stain of *Erastianism*, which would come best from themselves, in answer to the letter written unto them with Colin Alifon, whereof we desire you to put them in remembrance.

Thus we exhort you to set the Lord before your eyes, to seek his glory only, and to go on in nothing without himself, otherwise you shall come off with his dishonour, and your shame: So praying the Lord may give you a spirit for what work he hath to put in your hand: We remain,

Yours, &c.

Subscribed in our name, by our appointment.

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

To this Letter Mr. Lining returned answer of the date August 1685, which I shall set down in his own words.

As to your desires, I shall satisfy you as shortly as I can.

And *first*, hereby I declare I am of the same mind with what I left subscribed with mine own hand by way of testimony, which I still own, as I have there expressed myself.

As to the *second* of your desires, *viz.* If I be in any tolerable capacity to subject to ordination, &c.

I answer, what means I have used have been all in private, so that I cannot so well know my wants, until I be a little in public, and there see and hear others.

However I desire to be plain with you, that within a month, if the Lord continue the present means which he hath provided, I will be near twice through all the common heads of divinity. And as for the *Hebrew* I have gotten some knowledge of it, and the *Greek* I have some what revised it: But doubtless I would be the better as to my learning of a little space at the Colledge to revise

revise all. Therefore what you see fit for my maintenance there, you may send it with the first occasion.

As for ordination I shall use all lawful means to have it cleanly and according to your mind, for I intend to do nothing therein without seeking the Lord's mind, and acquainting you therewith, that I may have your Christian advice and consent thereto, before I subject myself to any whomsoever: But I am very apprehensive that there shall be no ordination had in thir lands, for Groningen was the only place that it could have been expected at, but I have heard lately that there is an act made by them since Mr. James Renwick was ordained, that no man shall pass there, without he subscribe the act of the Synod of Dort, Heidelberg Catechism, and their own Confession of faith. True it is, that this is the ordinary engagement of the ministers in thir lands, yet the Synod of Dort ratifying their forms, cannot be subscribed unto by any of our church; and for my part, I intend never to subscribe it, though I should never be ordained; for God calls no man to do evil that good may come of it, though sometimes he may bring good out of our evils; this is of his wonderful wisdom and mercy, which is not to be abused, neither is the rule of our duty.

Yet this shall not hinder me from trying, though I fear a refusal, that so the blame may ly at their door, and not be imputed to our negligence.

It was in like manner resolved by the Meeting that Mr. James Renwick, with James Wilson, Doctor Furd, and Michael Shields, should be desired to go and speak with Mr. Anthony Slie, a minister in Cumberland in England.

The occasion of this resolution was the account given to this meeting, by some friends (that had travelled in England) of this minister that he was concerned with the cause and testimony suffered and contended for by the societies, and a sympathizer with them in their afflictions: And therefore to be more and better acquainted with him it was thought fit to desire these persons to go and confer with him, from whom the Meeting expected an account, that so if he were found such as the societies could hear, and join with, these persons might invite and call him to preach the gospel among them.

Accordingly these persons above named went to Cumberland and conversed with the said minister.

It was moreover resolved by the Meeting that Colin Alifon and William Nairn should go to Ireland and speak with Mr. David Houstoun, a minister there, in order to know how he was affected to our testimony as then stated; Also in regard there were several bad things talked of him in this land, they were desired to lay out themselves to search after the truth or falsehood of these reports; but not to give him a Call to come to Scotland, but only to give an account of their diligence to the Meeting, that so it might be deliberated upon what was further their duty towards him.

The occasion of this resolution was an account given to this meeting that Mr. David was concerned with our testimony, and a contender against defections in Ireland. Accordingly presently after the meeting, the two young men went away, an account of whose diligence here follows, which I got from one of themselves.

When they went to Ireland, they first sought after some persons to whom they were recommended, and meeting with them told them their errand, and finding them honest, desired their assistance, and that some of them would take so much time as to go through the country with them and be present to hear what past betwixt Mr. Houstoun and them, which accordingly two or three did: As they passed through the country they met with several strange reports of Mr. David, and laid out themselves so far as they could, to enquire after the grounds of them. They found indeed that every person had heard of them, and every one almost, added a new one, yet could find no person, either of these who were for him, or of others, that could make out any of these reports. The most honest, and others also, believed them to be but reports, and the effects of prejudice which severals who were opposite to us, had at him.

However, this did not satisfy some, as the things were reported in such a probable manner, wherefore they collected together what seemed most material, and had the greatest appearance of truth in them, in order to lay them before Mr. David himself when they met with him †.

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† By other accounts it appears that these accusations were chiefly rash, harsh, uncharitable reflections upon some of the indulged ministers and their favourers, who were against public testifying against them.

Accordingly having met with him (where were also several of our friends) they gave Mr. David a relation of the state of our testimony, to which in every point he agreed. They also gave him a short account of the occasion and manner of our societies uniting together, and of our General Meetings. All which, he highly commended.

In short, he needed but a word to understand every particular, enlarging very much in blessing the Lord for, and admiring his goodness and condescendency towards that poor people in so leading and guiding them in the right way. And particularly in spiring them so zealously against the defections of ministers, and against compliance with the corruptions of the time.

In the end they told him, although they were but strangers to him, yet they hoped he would not take it ill, that they let him know that they had met with several strange reports concerning him, which somewhat troubled them, but they were hopeful he was able to make his innocency to appear. He took this very well, and applauded them much, for using so much freedom with him.

In short, as soon as they related the same to him, he gave an answer to each of them: And that with such a gesture, and in such words and expressions, as they could not but give him the greatest of their charity. Then he prayed, as he did likewise, when he began. To return,

It was resolved by the Meeting that the 8th of July next be observed by the Societies, a day of prayer unto the Lord, that if it were for his glory, he would fit Thomas Lining for the work of the ministry, and open a door for his lawful ordination there being at the time great need of faithful ministers. As also, to seek counsel and direction what to do anent calling home of Mr. Hamilton.

And it was resolved that the next General Meeting should meet at *Blackgannach*, upon the 18th day of August next.

As before the last meeting, so between it and this, there were strange apparitions and prodigies seen in the West, particularly the falling of bonnets, and armies, as guns, swords, spears, &c. which as they were much talked of at the time; so many concluded that they
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prefaged somewhat more than ordinary that this land was to meet with.

ACCORDING to the appointment of the last meeting a General Meeting convened at *Blackgannoch* upon the 18th of August 1686.

After prayer, and modelling of the meeting, Mr. James Renwick gave an account that he and some others according to the desire of the last meeting had gone to Cumberland and conversed with Mr. *Anthony Slie*, a minister, about the controversies of this church, and shewed him how our cause was at this time stated: Against which, Mr. Anthony told them he had nothing to object, but agreed therewith.

But albeit, the meeting was well satisfied and glad at the hearing of this account, yet it was thought fit and requisite, before any more was concluded anent him that two men, *viz.* John Latimer and John Matthison, should go and converse further with him, anent our cause and testimony for which the societies were suffering and contending (these who formerly went, having had but short time with him) and give an account thereof to the next meeting.

Accordingly, John Matthison and Thomas Latimer, in place of his brother John, went to Cumberland and conversed with Mr. Slie. But their report was either not given, or else I have forgot it. However though Mr. Slie came not to Scotland to preach, yet he continued to have a respect to our testimony, and a sympathy with the owners thereof.

There was read at this meeting, a Letter from Robert Hamilton, wherein he desired they should write to Embden, excusing themselves for not doing it sooner, and give thanks for the many favours received at several times from them. Though this was thought a duty, yet it was not written until after the next meeting, an account of which shall be given.

It was also resolved by the Meeting that Mr. James Renwick with Michael Shields should be desired to revise and transcribe the *Vindication* and present it to the next meeting. According to this resolution the vindication was revised and written again.

It was further resolved by them that the — day of August shall be observed by our Societies, a day of fast-
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and prayer upon the account of the Lord's people who are banished, both formerly and of late.

And it was appointed that the next Meeting should convene at ———, upon the 22d of *September* next.

IN the interval betwixt the last and this meeting, the case of the land was in general as before; and also the Societies, many of whom were taken, and others hunted after.

About the time of this meeting, the cruel enemy to carry on their dreadful designs, and to make the soldiers then on foot more fit for mischief (who were before skilful enough, of which they had given sufficient proof) and to have the more assurance for their acting whatever they should be commanded, be it never so horrid and barbarous; imposed an oath upon the most part of them, both foot and horse, which (as reported) was to this effect: That they shall not fight against their king upon any pretence whatsoever, but serve him upon all occasions, and obey his laws and commands whatever they should be. Some few refused it, and were put in prison.

AT the time appointed by the last meeting, *viz.* the 22d of *September* 1686, A General Meeting convened at ———.

After prayer and modelling of the meeting, it was resolved by the Meeting that a Letter should be sent to Embden.

This Letter was accordingly drawn up and sent with James Wilson, who not long after this meeting went abroad, being desired by some persons who were together at Glasgow to go and carry this Letter, and a Letter to Mr. Gerkima and some others, and to take with him a copy of the vindication, that Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Lining and Mr. Boyd, as also Mr. Douglass then at London, might see the same, and send their sentiments concerning it here.

This was thought necessary to be done, that it might be known what objections they had against it, and if they had none to get their counsel and advice anent it and concurrence with it.

Whereupon James Wilson having undertaken the voyage, received and delivered the letters, and taking a copy of the vindication with him, shewed it to the fore-

foresaid persons, some of whom sent home their mind concerning it with James Wilson, when he returned.

Here follows a copy of the letter to *Embsden*.

Right Honourable, and dearly beloved in the Lord,

AS Christ is love, and the pattern of it, so he says unto his disciples, that *this is his commandment* (by way of excellency) *that they love one another*. Love amongst the children is a thing well-pleasing to the Father and very advantageous to themselves; yea, it is some resemblance of heaven. So we have good ground to acknowledge that the effects of your love toward us have not been restrained; we have received frequent tokens of your sympathy and concernedness with a poor remnant who are wasted, and yet not consumed in the furnace of affliction. The effects of your bounty have been largely and frequently manifested toward us, whereof we are neither insensible nor forgetful, albeit we have given you but too much ground to apprehend of us, by our long and ungrateful silence, wherein we cannot well excuse ourselves. However, being conscious that we neither forgot nor yet despised your grateful benefits, which came always in season unto us, and in the time of particular distresses; we have some confidence to request for your favourable construction of that omission in us, of not returning unto you timely and due thanks; we being kept in a chafed and tossed condition by the common enemy, and also perplexed with various and confusing business from other hands, multiplying themselves upon us; therefore we hope you will not look upon us as a people forgetful of your benefits, but rather loaded and borne down with burdens and troubles of several kinds. Albeit our long silence may have done hurt both to you, in giving you occasion to misconstrue of us, and to our right honourable delegate Mr. Robert Hamilton, in marring his confidence with you, and also to ourselves, in making us sorry (which yet we could not help) for the great occasion of your possible mistake anent us; which yet we hope your favourable compassion will prevent.

What shall we say? we acknowledge ourselves your debtors, and though we in this our low condition cannot give you any recompence, yet we desire to pray that

that the Lord would be your exceeding rich reward, begging the continuance of your sympathy, and that you would not cease to pray fervently for us, for we cannot help nor extricate ourselves out of manifold calamities and difficulties, but we desire to have our waiting eyes toward the Lord, whose faithfulness fails not, and who is a present help in time of need. It is true, though many of us be apprehended and killed by the cruel adversaries, yea, severals without either trial or sentence, or previous time to deliberate upon death, and very many old and young women banished, to be sold as slaves, yet the Lord shews his goodness and power in raising up others in their places, and preserving a remnant and continuing the testimony. Howbeit, we are under great apprehensions and fears of some sad and universal stroke upon this land, whether by a sudden massacre or a wasting and desolating war, the Lord knoweth. Yet considering the heinous abominations of our time, the great and general apostacy from God, the excess of profanity, the grievous breach of covenant, the blasphemous arrogation in robbing King CHRIST of his princely prerogatives, the changing of his ordinances, the substituting of idolatry and superstition, the execrable and horrid cruelty of the common adversary, the detestable and lamentable lukewarmness, temporizing and defection of many ministers and professors; we cannot expect but God will rain down heavy and sore judgments. Also we know, that the machinations of the Popish malignant enemy are intended not against us only, but against all the churches of Christ through Europe: Therefore it is a time when none should be secure, but all ought to endeavour to secure themselves from the prevailing tyranny and usurpation of the beast.

But we hope, Right reverend and dear brethren, that we need not speak of such a thing to you, whom we expect to be on your guard against the wiles and fury of the devil and his instruments. It is not fit for us to exhort you, yet let us take our farewell of you at this time, with the words of the apostle,—*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked; and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with*

all prayer and supplication in the Spirit; and watching thereunto with all perseverance and thanksgiving for all saints, and for us, who remain,

*Your intire, obliged friends and servants in
the Lord,*

Subscribed in our name, and at our appointment,
by

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

It was also-resolved by the meeting, that a Letter should be written and sent to Mr. *Gerkima*, a minister of the gospel at *Leewarden*, to whom we were much obliged, particularly for his kindness to Mr. *Lining*.—Which accordingly was drawn up and sent with James *Wilson*: a copy of which letter follows.

Right Reverend and Dear Sir,

IT pleased a holy and gracious God to advance the reformation of the church of Scotland to a very high pitch, so that we were glorious to all our beholders; and to lift us up above our enemies, so that we were terrible to them as an army with banners. Notwithstanding whereof, we did prove most ungrateful and forgetful of our solemn and sacred oaths and covenants, and turned aside out of the way. Howbeit, the Lord hath been hitherto so condescending to our poor land, that he always raised up some to continue the testimony to the reformation, and to bear witness against all the particular steps of defection and backslidings, through this lamentable tract of our church's apostacy. But as the Lord's cause in Scotland hath been greatly opposed by the stated and avowed adversary, whether the Popish or Prelatic party; and as the doleful declensions of many who once appeared to be valiant for the truth, have given the work the forest wound; so the pitiful misrepresentations and sad aspersions of the contending and suffering part of this church, cast upon them by men of corrupt principles and practices as to the covenanted reformation, hath made our cause, or rather Christ's cause in our land to be greatly suspected.—Hereby many among us have been hardened in their
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wicked ways, some put to a non-plus, not knowing what to chuse and what to refuse; and foreign reformed churches perplexed how to judge of Scotland's sufferings and contendings. Hereupon we conceive that the reverend Presbytery, and also the famous university of Groningen have been put to a difficulty, not knowing how to act in our affairs, or what way to prove encouraging to us, since the confusions of Scotland (by the distorted informations of some who turned aside to the right, and of many who declined to the left hand) did flee abroad as mist through a great part of the Christian world, so that our beloved student Thomas Lining found no such access to the foresaid famous University of Groningen, as some of our young men had formerly done, whereby was laid upon us an obligation never to be forgotten.

Nevertheless, the Lord did wonderfully stir up you, Right reverend Sir, to own us and sympathize with us in such a strait, and to take some time from your weighty and great affairs, and to bestow the same upon the foresaid student.

Wherefore (though we cannot repay what we owe unto you for such kindness and labour, yet) we acknowledge ourselves your debtors, and render you many hearty thanks; and also, we are hopeful that we shall never forget such a great benefit as you have shewed unto us very seasonably in a discouraging time.

Howbeit, we expect to be yet further obliged to you by the continuance of your sympathy with us, and the help of your prayers in this furnace of affliction; (which we earnestly beg). O cease not to pray for the once glorious, but now defaced, deformed, afflicted, wounded and bleeding church of Christ in Scotland. And though it be not fit for us to exhort you, yet we hope ye will not be secure at this time, but consider what is a watchman's duty, in such a day, when the Lord seems some way or other to be declaring his displeasure against his church; and when the adversary, the man of sin, is strengthening his forces and aiming at the utter undoing of the whole interest of Christ in the earth. O study to acquit yourself as a valiant assertor of all your Master's prerogatives; a faithful bearer of his standard: A resolute maintainer of his truths, and painful labourer in his vineyard.

Thus commending you to the grace that is in Christ Jesus, which is sufficient for you; and praying that he may bless your ministry in his church, with much visible fruit, and that he may richly reward you with spiritual and temporal blessings for the favour and kindness which ye have shewn to a poor wrestling and suffering remnant, who according to their power are willing to serve you: And to whom if you would write, it would be very acceptable. We remain,

Right reverend, your most obliged and assured friends and servants in the Lord,

Subscribed in our name and at our appointment,

By MICHAEL SHIELDS.

The Meeting for that time being parted, met again the next day before whom the paper of VINDICATION (which was revised according to the desire of the last Meeting) was read: Some words in it were objected against, and some sentences debated. But the grounds of withdrawing from ministers, were desired to be further enlarged and more fully cleared, and brought to the next meeting. And copies thereof to be sent to Societies that they might more deliberately consider the same.

It was likewise resolved that six men, *viz.* George Hill, Gavin Wotherspoon, William Nisbet, John Clark, Alexander Marshall, and Michael Shields, should be desired to go and confer (upon the 14th of October next) with Samuel Hall, Marion Stuart, Elizabeth Wilson, Jean Hackstoun, and Marion Young, who had been in the fields with that wretched man John Gib, to try (not judicially but privately) how great a length they went in these blasphemies, and scandalous practices with the said John Gib; in order to further clearing us of our duty towards them.

Accordingly two of the men nominate, *viz.* Gavin Wotherspoon and John Clark, with some others, met at Edinburgh the foresaid day with several of these persons, and conferred with them: The result of which was, that they undertook to give an account in writing, and to subscribe it, how great a length they went with
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the said John Gib, and to send it to the next meeting, that they might consider further what was their duty concerning them.

It was in like manner resolved that a Letter should be written to Mr. David Houston, and that some should be sent to Ireland with the same. The tenor of which followeth,

To Mr. David Houston *minister of the gospel in Ireland.*

At ——— the 23d of Sept. 1686.

Right reverend Sir,

WHEN we consider the necessity of a standing gospel ministry, for the conversion of souls, the confirmation of the converted, and the discovery of the sins and duties of the time, and the great loss that his poor afflicted and wrestling church hath suffered, in being deprived in a great measure, for some years, of the faithful and free preaching of the gospel; we look upon it as a great duty incumbent upon us, to lay out ourselves, in our places and stations, to the utmost of our power, to recover such a sad and lamentable loss, and that our land may enjoy the inestimable benefit of a pure, powerful and plentiful gospel: Wherefore, we hearing of your zealous inclinations and affections to this poor suffering church, did send over some to confer with you, whose informations anent you have been satisfying to us; whereupon we have jointly resolved to send over the bearer hereof, to confer further with you, and to convey you unto us, according to your resolution; that so we may meet together, which we desire that it may, through the Lord's goodness, tend both to your and our satisfaction.

Now, reverend Sir, we hope that you will take this to your consideration, and not look lightly upon the case of our land; for though we be low, and so our need of help the greater, yet we may say, that through many places of Scotland, there is now among people more longing and earnest desire after the faithful and pure preaching of the gospel than formerly we have observed. But we shall not insist upon this. And as for reports anent yourself, (which we thought not fit to insert here, and whereof you would do well to clear yourself) we refer

you

you to the information of the bearer, until that you and we meet together, if the Lord please to order it so in his holy providence.

Thus, desiring to intreat the Lord, that he may conduct you safely unto us; and that our meeting together may be blessed with a right and full understanding of one another, and joint concurring together, for the advancement of his public work; and earnestly begging the help of your prayers, we commend you to the grace that is in Christ Jesus, your Master; and we are,

Reverend Sir,

Your endeared friends and

servants in the Lord,

Subscribed in our name, and by our direction, by the clerk of our General Meeting,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

James Bool was appointed to go to Ireland with this Letter to Mr. David, which accordingly, not long after the meeting, he did. But before he went, all our friends were gathered together, who had been living any time in Ireland, and were now resident here, that we might be informed anent what they knew of Mr. David.

They could not relate any difference in his principles from us, but gave in some accusations against him, which they had by report, and which were all *personalia*, all which accusations were written and delivered to James Bool, to the end that he might when he went to Ireland endeavour to get either the verity or falsehood of these things proved. And if he found them to be but calumnies, he was to conduct Mr. David to this land, according to his former resolution.

Accordingly James Bool used all diligence in Ireland for information with respect to these reports, bringing some of Mr. David's accusers and him face to face, and found no ground for the foresaid accusations.

It was likewise appointed by the Meeting that the 28th of October should be observed by our Societies, a day of fasting and prayer unto the Lord upon the account of the hiding of his face, and withdrawing the
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sweet and lively influences of his holy Spirit from his people, and that the causes thereof might be searched out and mourned over, and to cry mightily to the Lord for his returning to his people to visit them with his presence and salvation, and that he may pour out his Spirit from on high upon them.

And it was resolved that the next meeting should convene at *Wanlockhead*, upon the 22d of December, 1686.

THE case of the country continued as before, and the cruelty of the enemy against the societies was still manifested by apprehending, imprisoning, and banishing many, and most inhumanly murdering others in cold blood in the fields. Which though sad in itself, yet it did not daunt nor discourage their brethren, whether those at liberty or those that were in bonds, from asserting and contending for the cause and testimony, for adhering to which their blood was shed like water. And in the mean time they had many discouraging difficulties to wrestle with, which were procured by the forementioned informations and accusations of some ministers and others against them, both at home and abroad, an effect of which appeared at this time, in a Letter from Mr. Hamilton of the date September 30th, 1686. And another effect appeared in a Protestation, against Mr. James Renwick, &c. subscribed by William M'Hutcherson in the name of all the professors betwixt Dee and Cree, a compend of both which here follows.

Much honoured of the Lord,

SINCE my last to you dated August 5th, I have had a new trial, which though a very heavy and bitter one, yet I could not but see much of the Lord's hand in it.—Mr. Kooleman, Thursday last came to this Town, where he had not been for some years before.—Our friends called him to preach with them, where I and the family (*viz* Earlstouns) were hearing: after the exercise he was desired to stay and sup with them, and I and my sister were also invited. We were not well set down to table, when in great vehemency, he began to inform against you, and to run down all the late wrestlings, the half of which I could not retain, yet so much of it as I remember I here insert, (omitting the answers I then gave) which was.

He said; he had very distinct accounts from sure hands, that the report of a witnessing party in Scotland, was all lies. That there were about an hundred bodies there, led by Renwick a poor blown up illiterate person, who but very lately had any profession of religion; that he preached publicly but once in twenty days, or a month; that the people that followed him were for killing all who were not of their own judgment; That they are a dreadful party, who will go into a gentleman's house and take what ever makes for them, and then run away, and thus the poor family is both spoiled by them, and laid open to the enemies persecution; that their suffering is their sin, bringing themselves in hazard; and that the ministers had told him that if ever there was a General Assembly or states of their mind, they would make Renwick and Hamilton suffer for it in a high degree, and all who have been active in misleading these poor bodies, &c*.

As it was grievous to hear such a man so employed; so especially, as he freely and openly confessed to myself, that the depressing of you, and your cause and the poor family here, was his principal design in coming here, and we found him as good as his word: yet I, nor the family durst not withdraw from him, desiring rather to look on him with pity and compassion, as a stranger sadly misinformed, who yet is the only witness in the Netherlands.

If there were no more to be said against these ministers and that party, but their murdering such worthies as Messrs Kooleman, Askin, Peden, &c. with their horrid misinformations, it is sufficient to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, his cause and interest, to stand afar off from them, until their repentance be as public as their opposition has been. O they have done much evil.—My judgment in this, is no other than what was the mind of many of our worthies, who are now in glory. I have sent you an exact copy of one of their letters, viz. Mr. Cargill's, which my soul joins with. I shall only lay before you, Jer. xii. 5, 6.—*Believe them not, tho' they speak fair words unto thee.*

Our old friend Mr. Brackel is also active against you, and the poor family here, and informed professor Mark bitterly against you, and excited him to reprove Mr. Ger-

* See an answer to this in Mr. Renwick's Life, page 111, to 114.

Cerkima sharply for teaching Mr. Lining.—But in this they were not successful.

After Mr. Boyd had stayed six, or seven days with me he went to Groningen and stayed a day or two, and returned immediately, whereupon I took occasion to ask him why he prayed not for Mr. Renwick and the witnessing remnant at home,—he said that he durst not do it under such a notion as the witnessing remnant, knowing to his certain knowledge there was some of the other party as great wrestlers and contenders as they, neither durst he on that same head pray for Mr. Renwick.

I answered that it seemed strange that any who looked upon Mr. Renwick as an answer of prayer, and a gift of God sent us in our low estate, durst bow a knee and not acknowledge him for it; or how they durst seek more of the Lord, and not acknowledge him for what they had gotten.

He replied, well Sir, whatever be your judgment, friends at home and I are of one mind in that, yea they judged that they should be censured that did it, and that privately they had censured some precipitant persons who had been of my judgment, &c.†.

Upon the 21st of August, Again conversing with him on his new opinion, *viz.* That now no other satisfaction was to be sought of any for bygone things, providing they were but willing to join in the public work. At first, he would have dissembled in it: But I putting him in mind of his letter to William Cleland, &c. He then acknowledged it, and said that it was the judgment of friends at home, and his also.—I said that I knew that both the judgment and practice of friends at home was otherwise formerly, and I hoped it was so still, and instanced Mr. Renwick his requiring satisfaction of scandalous compliers, before he would admit them to present their children to baptism. He answered, that it was now gone.—He then reflected upon me for separating from those of my own nation, *viz.* Monmouth's and Argyle's party.—And accidentally meeting a gentleman, stiled Pardoven, one of his acquaintance who is a furious zealot for the Association, he introduced him and me into converse, and when the gentleman was rag-

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† Here his dissimulation appeared, in giving it under his hand when he left Scotland that he agreed with the Testimony as stated by the Societies against the Associators. See Mr. Renwick's XLV. Letter to Mr. Hamilton.

ing, and reviling all who did not join with Monmouth and Argyle, Mr. Boyd shewed himself well pleased with him, and dissatisfied with me.

The last time Mr. Kooleman was here giving his informations he had not great advantage, I offering to write down and subscribe all I had asserted, and desired him and the other party to do the like, which he refused, and finding that this was like to lose all to them, this stratagem is now fallen upon to make it pass, that all that I had ever informed anent a suffering party in that land, was all Chimera's, that there was never any thing like it; only some few sectaries were lately arisen by me and Renwick. This Mr. Kooleman was at much pains to spread, as being the readiest way to answer all objections, and this now passes for current with many.

So I seeing that no further information of mine could have place, and that the Lord was loosing me from Friesland, and that my further staying there could not be for further advantage either to you, the poor family, or our friends here embarked with us.—Upon these considerations, I determined to take my life in my hand again, and go to other churches, though our dear friends here with many tears pressed my staying, yet this is too weak to hold me, being persuaded that the Lord his cause and interest are calling me to move: Wo to them that are seeking a rest to themselves, when the ark of God, and his little flock are in the fields.

Now ye know my outward encouragement is but small, and my danger great: O then, I desire your prayers and sympathy: my errand and design, the Lord knows, is to venture yet again my life through the wilderness for my poor afflicted mother, and although there is none living more in his debt, than I am, yet there is none more unworthy of the least of his favours to a poor unworthy, wretched sinful worm: but he, O he delighteth in mercy, and duty is ours, the success it his, and he can do us no wrong.—If I can win at Diamond, I intend it.

I say, O mind me, who although with much weakness I have served you in the Lord's work, yet he knows it was in uprightness and sincerity, and I hope ye have learned of your great master not to cast at the poor's mite, but to take the will for the deed: I say your welfare, and that poor church's thriving I have sought; and it is my great desire to live and die in your service, and breathing
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thing out my love and affection to you, my aim hath been your well, and Christ's reigning amongst you more gloriously than ever, which though I never see, yet I live in the faith it shall be, though at the present I am in the apprehension of sudden terrible wasting judgments.

Remember poor Friesland, labour to strengthen those that are yet standing in it: there are two praying societies yet left in Leewarden persecuted on the account of you and the cause.—I also recommend the poor family to you, the only family in this land shot at by all ranks, for Christ's cause, a family witnessing both at home and abroad.

If in any thing I can serve you, it shall be my joy to do it, in the Lord's work.—Though our dear friends pressed me to take Mr. Lining with me, yet I durst not do it without your consent, so he stays in the family, he will want for nothing.

Now the blessing of the most high be with you: it is like we may never meet in time face to face; let us meet much before the throne, and be preparing, looking and longing for that day of the bridegroom when he will gather all his never to part: pray, pray for the well of Jerusalem, and for him who is yours in the Lord,

ROBERT HAMILTON.

THE PROTESTATION against MR. JAMES RENWICK, together with his REPLY thereto, which for brevity's sake is a little abridged.

WE Undersubscribers, according to the laudable example of others taking to our serious consideration, the great scandal and woful effects of division among the professors of the church of Scotland, and especially amongst ourselves: and finding the cause of this division to proceed partly from some paying cess, hearing curates, taking the late abjuration oath: And partly from others their condemning these things, and adhering to the late declaration on the church doors, and receiving of, and adhering to Mr. James Renwick, without the consent of the Remnant godly and faithful ministers,—contrary to the laudable practice of this church, and acts of the General Assembly since the Reformation to this day.

And finding these things to be above our capacity to decide;—we do hereby refer and submit ourselves in these, to an assembly of faithful ministers and elders,—only competent judges of such debateable principles and practices,—and promise upon the one hand to give satisfaction to the church, according as we shall be found guilty, and convinced by the word of God for any thing done by us, to the scandal of our dear brethren.

And upon the other hand, we will forbear to call, or hear, or join with Mr. James Renwick, till such time as his ordination be seen and approven of some competent number of the faithful ministers of the church of Scotland,—and are willing upon his submission to his brethren, according to the word, to receive him into our bosom;—but if he, at the desire of strangers, or any of our brethren dividing from us, intrude himself on our labours,—till such time as we have the mind of faithful ministers ament the foresaid things, we will protest against all such dealing, as horrid and abominable intrusion and usurpation before God and man.

Subscribed with my hand in the name of this place of the Stewartry betwixt the Water of *Dee* and *Cree*, in the name of the whole,

Sic Subscribitur,

Nov. 1686.

WILLIAM M. HUTCHISON.

THE REPLY to the foregoing Paper, directed to the Authors and Consenters, by MR. JAMES RENWICK.

AS it doth not a little grieve me that such a paper should have come from your hands, who profess adherence to presbyterial government, who have suffered so much at the hands of the common enemy, and with whom (at least some of you) I have gone some time to the house of God in company, and have been in some perils because of the sword of the adversary,

So, Albeit I am conscious to myself of no desire, nor delight in keeping up needless strifes, and vain janglings; of no design to render any persons, or party odious; And also of no inclination to resent private and personal injuries: Yet when I perceive the truths of God, and
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the work of Reformation, which hath been transmitted to us through the wrestlings and blood of our worthy martyrs, in a great measure, like to be buried; and many valiant and honourable contendings and sufferings of Christ's witnesses in our age, condemned and forgotten; I say, when I perceive this, I cannot, I dare not keep silence.

Therefore your paper being given in to me, November 2d, 1686. and finding it so prejudicial to the interest of Christ, I have thought fit, with sorrow, sobriety and candour, to give some animadversions upon it.

1. The scope and design of it, is, to stop the preaching of the gospel.

2. When ye speak of division, ye do not deduce the same from its own original: For ye say that the cause thereof partly proceeds from some their paying cesses, hearing curates, and taking the late abjuration oath; and partly from others their condemning these things, adhering to the late declaration on church doors, and receiving of, and adhering to Mr. James Renwick without the consent and approbation of the Remnant godly and faithful ministers, &c. Whereas it is well known to all who are not strangers to the case of our church, that divisions abounded as much before there were any thoughts of that declaration, and before I (though most unworthy of such a honour) did put hand to the public work. I judge our divisions have their more native rise and real progress from a party who still cleaved to the malignant interest, and fell upon public resolutions to bring known malignants into places of power and trust: From the many presbyterian ministers, who changed their commission, and exercised their ministry under this abjured Antichristian Prelacy: From others, who took a new holding of their ministry from an arrogated headship over the church, by accepting indulgences, warrants, and restrictions from the usurper of their Master's crown: From others, who united with the forefaids, both curates and indulged, and stiffly pleaded for the same: From others, who did meet in Presbyteries to censure the more faithful, for discovering the sin of the indulgence: From others, who at Bothwel, opposed the keeping of a day of humiliation for the sins of the time, and foisted in the late tyrant's interest into the declaration of the army: From others, who after Bothwel induced the prisoners taken

taken at that fatal defeat, to subscribe the conscience-defiling bond of peace: From others, who tolerated, or advised people to compliance with other abominations of the time: From others, who have been unfaithful in not applying their doctrine against the prevailing sins of our day: From others, who have satisfied themselves to ly by from the exercise of their ministry, and desisted from the work of the Lord, and that when his vineyard stood most in need: And from others who have gone into, carried on, or countenanced *hatch-potch* confederacies with malignants and sectaries, and temporizing compliers: And *finally*, From all, whether ministers or people, who have carried on, plaitered, or strengthened any course of defection, through the course of this churches sinful and lamentable revolt.

3. Ye very inconsiderately say, ‘That the cause of this division proceeds partly from some paying cess, hearing curates, and taking the late abjuration oath: And partly from others condemning these things, adhering to the late declaration: And receiving of, and adhering to Mr. James Renwick, without the consent of the Remnant godly and faithful ministers of the church of Scotland.’ Herein no small contradiction and absurdity is implied; For in your accounts, the paying of cess, the hearing of curates, and taking the abjuration oath, hath caused division; and the condemning the foresaids hath done the like: Now a practical condemning of these things, is a not doing of them; and the same charge laid against the doing of a thing, and the not doing of the same thing, is flatly contradictory: Ye judge that the condemning of sin as well as the practising of it must (either in part, or in whole) bear the blame of division.

Is not this most absurd? Is not this sad misreckoning? Though ye shall say that the practising of the foresaid evils, hath caused a sad division, and the condemning of the same, a just and warrantable division, yet it cannot be here meant, because ye here speak only of the division which hath scandalous and woful effects:—and as to the forementioned declaration, I know some of the ministers, and many of yourselves opened not a mouth against it, while they thought it subservient to their designs: and as for the receiving of, and adhering to Mr. James Renwick (as ye say,) without the consent of the godly and faithful ministers of the church of Scotland;

it is not pertinent for me to answer much unto it, as ye gave it forth. Only seeing there are so many parties, and factions of ministers, I desire to know to whom (or if to all) ye give that signature FAITHFUL. And whether or not, ye judge that I ought to have sought the consent, and approbation of any that are UNFAITHFUL. And whereas ye speak of this receiying and adhering (as ye term it) as being contrary to the laudable practice of this church, and acts of the General Assemblies; ye would be pleased to consider the broken and declining state of this church, and then instance either practice, or act, whereof ye do speak.

4. Ye overturn some material pieces of our attained Reformation: For, the paying of cess, hearing the curates, and taking the abjuration oath, are brought in debate, and exhibited as above your capacity to decide and determine: And ye do tacitly insinuate a forbearance to meddle in these things, as if they were not worthy to be contended against: But will submit yourselves in all the forefaids, to an assembly (as ye say) of faithful ministers and elders.

Where can ye get a more faithful Assembly to decide these matters, than our venerable assemblies who have decided the same already? And where can ye have a more faithful decision then they have given, by their acts, according to the word of God? As for the paying of the cess, does not the act of the General Assembly, June 17th, 1646. Sess. 14. for censuring compliers with the enemies of this kirk and kingdom, sufficiently determine the same? As for hearing the curates: Do not our Covenants National and Solemn League, convincingly condemn the same? As for the Abjuration Oath, Does not the act of the Assembly June 28th, 1648, Sess. 14. against all oaths and bonds in the common cause without the consent of the church, clearly decide the same? If these things be now debateable principles, all the actings and sufferings that have been these twenty-six years and more, may be brought in debate and the justness thereof questioned.

Had our Assemblies no authority? or did they not give right decisions in these matters, that they are now resisted from, and their sentences referred to the decision of others? Yea, where shall so many ministers now be had, as to make up an Assembly, except these who are practising, or tolerating the forefaid evils? Moreover, if an

Assembly, lesser or greater, should give out an act, or sentence, for the lawfulness of paying the cess, hearing the curates, and taking the abjuration oath; would ye stand to it? If ye would stand to it, would not that be an implicit submission, and an obeying man, rather than God? If ye would not stand to it, where is your submission in these points? For my part, what is clearly decided already, both divinely, and ecclesiastically, I will never refer it to the decision of any man; Shall I submit it to man to determine whether or not the soul of man is immortal? Or whether there be more sacraments than two? Let Assemblies confirm, ratify and approve undoubted, uncontroverted truths, and these things that have been already justly and clearly decided: But let none give unto them the determination and decision of these things.

5. 'Ye once give forth the paying of cess, the hearing of curates, and the taking the abjuration oath, upon the one hand; and upon the other hand, the condemning of these things; the adhering to the foresaid declaration, and receiving of, and adhering to Mr. James Renwick,' &c. as debateable principles, and practices, and matters above our capacity to decide: And then you assume to yourselves the determining that none shall call or join with the said Mr. James: Doth not this imply, (*first,*) A contradiction? Ye cannot determine, and yet you can determine; ye will not decide, and yet ye do decide: Does it not import, (*secondly,*) that it is a matter in debate with you, whether or not, people may hear the curates? But it is out of our debate with you, whether or not, people may hear the curates? But it is out of all debate with you, that ye ought not to join with me in my ministry: And yet in what precedes in your paper ye give forth the receiving of me, only as a debateable thing: and how sufficient a ground is a matter debateable with the Protestors, to enter such a resolved Protestation upon, let any man of reason judge?

6. The ground ye walk upon (in your paper) in forbearing to call or join with Mr. James Renwick, and for marching in such violent opposition against him, is because his ordination is not seen, and approven (as ye say) by the faithful ministers of the church of Scotland. This in your account, albeit in the broken and declined state of the church, is more sinful, scandalous, and offensive than all that can be tabled against the curates.

For this gives you ground to determine not only a forbearance to join with, but of a direct opposition unto my ministry; Whereas all that ye have against the Curates, is in debate (as said is) Whether or not they may be heard.

Howbeit, as to my ordination, it is valid and lawful, and I refuse not to give all possible satisfaction, to any who may be conscientiously desirous to hear: Neither refuse I to satisfy any faithful minister thereanent, who may seek the same. Yea, hearing that a certain minister of the church of Scotland was desirous of information anent my ordination, I did write unto him a true transcript of the certificate of the same, with my judgment as to the chief things controverted in our day; but I never received any answer. Likewise, some other ministers whom ye know, (Messrs. Barclay and Langlands) shewed their willingness to have a concurrence between them and me, and to lay all debates aside; which I could not do, except these offensive courses were resented and relinquished. They made no exception against me on account of my ordination not being seen and approved by the ministers, &c.

But as I refuse not to satisfy any faithful ministers upon that head,—and I am willing to yield all due subjection unto them in the Lord: Nevertheless, I humbly conceive, that these bear not the signature of faithful ministers, and of such as I am subject unto; who have directly and actually complied with the enemies of this covenanted church and kingdom; or who defend, excuse, plaister, or cover and tolerate compliances with the foresaid enemies and their palpable defection from the reformation of this church; or, who pervert their ministry by contradicting our present testimony, founded upon and agreeable to the scriptures, our Confession and Covenants; or who have deserted ministerial duties, and desisted from the public work of preaching the gospel, for fear of hazard; or who have divided the church,—calumniated and condemned the more faithful.

Now, (passing by others whom I might mention) I say, I humbly conceive that ministers guilty of all or any, more or fewer of the forefaids, are not such, as in conscience I can subject unto, considering these charges (as I desire) with application to ministers of this organical church, under the same bond of Covenant with us, and obliged to maintain the same word of testimony,

and with respect to the broken and declined state of this church, They will be found sufficiently to warrant my non-subjection to these (while such) to whom they are duly applicable.

7. Ye call the foresaid Mr. James his preaching upon a call, without previous submission to ministers, against whom he hath just exceptions, 'an horrid and abominable usurpation and intrusion:' Whereas it cannot be called usurpation, because I have a protestative mission to exercise all the parts of my ministry; neither can it be called intrusion upon the labours of any faithful ministers of Christ: For I declare, with grief and lamentation, that I travelled for a considerable space of time through the country of Scotland, where professors and sufferers did most abound, and in all my journies I never heard of any labouring, save the indulged for a season, and the Curates. And I think I may say before God, that it was pity toward the scattered sheep of Christ in this land, who were fainting and swooning through the famine of the public ordinances, that moved me to subject myself in such a weak condition to so great a work, and to undergo so many perils and wanderings. And it is most likely, if labourers had been faithful and laborious, I had laboured none to this very day.

8. Ye signify your resolution to protest against the foresaid Mr. James his preaching, as 'horrid and abominable usurpation and intrusion upon you and your labours, till such time (mark it) as ye have the mind of your faithful ministers anent the foresaid things.'

What are these things? They are nothing, if they be not the cess-paying, hearing curates, and taking the abjuration oath upon the one hand; and upon the other hand, the condemning these things, and adhering to the foresaid declaration, and receiving of, and adhering to the above-named person, without the consent and approbation (as ye say) of the remanent godly and faithful ministers, &c.

I am content indeed, that ye cast upon the receivers of my ministry the brand of condemning these iniquities, but does not this that ye say, confirm what I have instructed in animadversion fourth, *viz.* That ye have overturned some great and material pieces of our reformation, and brought in debate what was out of debate, and that ye will have a new decision of what has been by
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the authority of the church of Scotland, long ago, very well decided. What if these faithful ministers shall counsel you to pay the Cess, hear the curates, and allow taking the abjuration oath? And if ye follow their counsel, Where will ye be? And if ye follow it not, How can ye hang your resolved Protestation upon it? But herein you have inveigled yourselves in a great intricacy: For some of the ministers whom ye account faithful, will tolerate (if not defend) the paying of Cess, and others will condemn it: Some of them will allow of taking the abjuration oath, and others will (at least did) disapprove of it: Some of them will wink at hearing of Curates, and others will testify against it. Now, whom will ye follow? and whose determination will ye take in your appeal? Have ye not brought yourselves by this to a great difficulty?

9. Ye express yourselves with such confusion, as I know not whether to look upon you as men in office or out of office, or both; ye speak with one breath as if ye were ministers, and yet also, only as people: For ye say, 'If the foresaid Mr, James, at the desire of strangers, or of any of your brethren dividing from you, shall intrude himself on your labours, without your call or consent, till such time as ye have the mind of your faithful ministers anent the foresaid things, ye will protest against it as horrid intrusion on your labours.' If ye be people, your labours cannot be intruded upon by the exercise of the ministerial function: And if ye be ministers, how come ye to say, That ye must have the mind of your faithful ministers? I never knew ministers speak so. And though ye should say that ye are both ministers and people, yet none can free such a speech of worse than an error in orthography. And I do verily wonder, how ye can build such absurdities upon some expressions in some of our former papers, which many of you once owned, and which can bear a far other and better sense than ye put upon them: And in the mean time, ye yourselves fall in a greater fault. And if I thought that any clergyman had penned your paper, I would take a little liberty to discover the contradictions and confusions, (to say no worse) and that he hath not adverted to his work when he wrote it. But what I have observed in it, giving me occasion to take it as the draught of illiterate men, (who sometimes cannot aptly express their

meaning) I shall be the more favourable, and shall forbear.

10. Ye say, 'That ye will look upon Mr. James his preaching the gospel, without subjection to such ministers as he hath sufficient exceptions against, to be divisive and destructive to the poor suffering remnant of this church.' Whereunto I shall reply nothing, but, 'That the faithful remnant of this church, who suffer most, both by the hands and tongues of men, do not look with your eyes.'

11. Ye give in your paper subscribed by a faithful and creditable man indeed, William M' Hutchison, in the name of that place of the stuartry of Galloway betwixt Cree and Dee :—Whereby ye have done an injury to some conscientious sufferers and owners of truth in that place, who do abominate your deed ; and also to yourselves in your designation so comprehensive as to exclude none, either papists or malignants who reside there. And again ye say, in the name of the whole. Is that of the whole of your party ? Does not this give just ground of exception against the whole of your party ?

Now, having in weakness (though with studied candour and sobriety) briefly animadverted upon some things in your paper, wherein I conceived to lie the greatest prejudices to the work of the Lord, I shall not touch some other things in it, which may be looked upon as importing only weakness, chusing rather to cover these, and pass them in silence*.

And notwithstanding of all that ye have done against me, I have love to you, and desire to behave myself as a friend : Yea, I may say, I am filled with a great measure of sorrow and amazement when I consider your present course and carriage, and compare it with your former. Many of you, and I, have wandered in the silent watches of the night together, been in perils together, fled from the sword of the common adversary together ; and I appeal to yourselves if ye have not found sometimes something of the power of God in our solemnities together.—Ye have suffered much at the hand of the enemy, even to the shedding of the blood of many of you, which I hope was acceptable to God, and is a part of the seed of the church.—Ye professed once with

* See Renwick's letters, viz. let. 48. and his life, p 98,--103.

us the same thing that we own and profess this day ; ye were the most forward for action, and we gloried in you, and boasted of you, and I think this hath been our sin and a part of the cause of your judgment,

Howbeit, there are some things wherein ye have greatly wronged the cause of Christ, which (out of respect to that cause, and love to your souls) I shall bring to your remembrance, and set before you for your serious consideration,

Therefore (I say) consider, when ye were professing a concurrence with us in the stated testimony of our day, what underhand dealing ye had with other parties, (without once acquainting us therewith) from which both ye and we were obliged to stand at a due distance.

Consider how ye divided from us, and joined with ministers chargeable with sundry offences, (still defended) and are now gone that length that I know not any ministers (however sadly turned aside) from whom ye stand at a distance ; yea, do not some of them whom ye call and embrace, calumniate and condemn the more faithful remnant, uttering as untender and uncharitable expressions of them as they can do of the persecuting enemy.

By what warrant should they be heard preach, who speak lies in the name of the Lord ? Consider, whether are the ministers who lurk and reside at Edinburgh, and who are chargeable with other things than at present I shall name ; I say, are they now become such unto you, that ye will receive no ministers but such as have an approbation and warrant from them ? Consider also, how many temporizing compliers ye have received into your select societies ?

Consider how ye came to our General Meeting, *Jan.* 28th, 1686, with what purpose of uniting with us, the Lord knows ; and when we were using all means to conciliate an union in the Lord, ye dealt very disingenuously with us. And also, when we because of your sundry offences no way repented by you, did conscientiously, in our own names, refuse your concurrence with us in selected Christian fellowship, ye went away and did spread sad lies and calumnies of us.

Consider how ye have dispersed your papers and pamphlets, with what truth and tenderness as to the charges therein contained, we leave to every conscientious Christian who knows us to judge.

Consider

Consider how ye have by letters, informations, counsels and protestations, with more zeal, opposed and contended against an afflicted witnessing Remnant, than ever ye did against the antichristian hierarchy. And tho' the Lord knows (as far as I can see into my heart) I mention it not to resent any injury done unto myself, yet I must desire you to consider how when I came to your border, offering to converse with you, and willing to preach the gospel, as formerly I had done in that place, you would let none speak with me but such as you pleased: Ye separated from me when I was going about family exercise; and you also protested against both my preaching and converse.

Consider what errors, absurdities, contradictions, &c. are stuffed into your paper prefixed. O I say, consider and take a look of these things; how thereby ye have sadly wronged the interest of Christ,—have made the enemy to blaspheme,—made conscientious sufferers to stumble and fall,—to grope in the dark not knowing what to chuse or refuse,—have hardened the hearts, and strengthened the hands of these engaged in a course of defection, so that they do not turn from the evil of their ways,—have done so much to deprive posterity of the truths which ought to be transmitted to them; and *finally*, how you have thereby sinned against your own souls.

Now I beseech you consider your ways: And that the Lord may pour out on you the spirit of mourning and turning, is the prayer of him who is your soul's well-wisher.

Sic Subscribitur,

JAMES RENWICK,

ACCORDING to the appointment of the last Meeting, a General Meeting convened at *Wanlockhead*, upon the 22d of December, 1686. Prayer (as was usual) being gone about, and the meeting modelled.

Mr. David Houston having come out of Ireland, with James Boole (or Boyle) was conducted to this meeting: To which Mr. Alexander Shields preacher of the gospel did likewise come, who had upon the 21st of October made his escape out of prison, and then came to the United Societies, and was for some time with Mr. James
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Renwick, who was very well satisfied with him. These two ministers having come to the meeting, a short account of what was there done with reference to them follows.

However considering the importance of what was done at the last General Meeting, I judge it necessary to give you a true account thereof.

There came two ministers to the last Meeting *December 22d, 1686. viz. Mr. David Houston, and Mr. Alexander Shields.* But I shall first give you an account of our carrying toward the said *Mr. David*, and toward the foresaid *Mr. Alexander.*

When I was in England the last summer, the General Meeting of our Societies being informed that *Mr. David Houston* refused concurrence with, and subjection to the ministers in Ireland because of their defections, and that he preached faithfully against all the sins of the times, did send unto him *Colin Alison* and *William Nairn* to know the verity thereof; who after full and free communing with the said *Mr. David* anent all the heads of our present testimony, received great satisfaction; who also signified unto them his resolution of coming unto us. But before we sent any unto him again, we did convocate all our friends who had been living any time in Ireland, and now come over to us, that we might inform ourselves anent what they knew of the said *Mr. David*, who could not relate any difference in his principles from us, but gave in some accusation against him which they had but by report, and were all *personalia*: All which accusations were drawn up and delivered to *James Boyle*, who was sent to Ireland to get the verity or falsehood of every one of these things instructed, and finding them to be but calumnies, to conduct the foresaid *Mr. David* to us, according to his own resolution. So the said *James* laying out search for information anent these reports, conferring with some of *Mr. David's* accusers, bringing him and them face to face; likewise conferring with some of his neighbours and ordinary hearers, and finding no ground for the foresaid accusations, did conduct *Mr. David* unto us, that we might satisfy ourselves anent him in a free communing with himself.

Wherefore *Mr. David* came to our last General Meeting, which was upon *December 22d, 1686.* being accompanied with one *James Kinloch*, who was particularly

larly sent by some societies in Ireland to our correspondence, and who also testified before us all for Mr. *David's* honesty and innocency of the foresaid alledgances; after which, we did read over in Mr. *David's* hearing, the introduction to our vindication, wherein are summarily comprehended some signal steps of our church's defection, and a brief declaration of our present testimony, both as to what we own and disown, together with the fifth head of the same vindication, containing (among other things) ten grounds, every one of which, we judge sufficient for withdrawing from ministers of this covenanted and reformed church, to whom they are applicable in this broken and declining state: and then we asked Mr. *David's* judgment of what he had heard, and whether or not he was of one mind with us as to every part of our present testimony. He replied, that as to some matters of fact he was ignorant, but he agreed with our judgment and principles in all that he had heard, adding, that it was foretold by *Luther*, that before Christ's glorious appearance for his church in the last days, the controversy should be stated and rid about ministry and magistracy. So Mr. *David* being desired to remove, we gave in our minds about his answer, and it was sustained as satisfying in that point. After this, we consulted among ourselves what was further necessary to desire for our further satisfaction anent him; and having heard from himself, that he had some papers with him which could tend to our information and clearing, concerning his carriage for many years; we called him to us again, and desired to hear these papers. So there was read in our hearing, first his licence, then his ordination, which was to the parish of *Sraffrie*, a little before the Restoration. Next (as I remember) a paper which he had drawn up himself, and given to the ministers in Ireland, containing his reasons wherefore he would not be subordinate unto, nor concur with them, whereof their opposition to the suffering party in Scotland was one. Afterward were read some testificates, from the people in the respective places in *Ireland*, where he had exercised his ministry, some whereof being of a very late date, and one of them bearing, that they had been greatly refreshed and edified with his preaching the gospel amongst them; but that he had denied them other privileges for reasons satisfying to himself; by which he declared, they understood his refusing to baptize

tize their children, because of their paying exactions to the enemy, and this we looked upon as the greater testimony.

Further, we enquired how long he had kept a meeting-house in Ireland, and upon what terms; and declared the terms of his holding were not sinful; for he was settled by the ministers upon the call of the people; and whensoever he knew of any transaction of the said ministers with the so called magistrate, that he forsook his meeting-house, and refused subordination to these ministers; which was a little after *Bothwel*. Moreover, he declared, and *James Kinloch* witnessed the same, that at the incoming of the associators, *Anno 1685*, he gave a plain and public testimony against that *hotch-potch* confederacy. Now, *Mr. David* being desired to remove again, we communed together anent what we had heard from his papers and from his own mouth, and found a great measure of satisfaction therefrom.

Howbeit, to remove scruples yet further, we called him again to us, and dealt freely with him in telling him what was reported, by some, of him, desiring to hear what he would say to these things himself. All which allegiances he heard very patiently, and answered to them one by one, as they were given in, very pleasantly, and gave very demonstrating evidences of his innocency.

Now, from all the foresaids, we being in such a measure satisfied in our consciences, concerning the said *Mr. David*; our societies do both call him, and hear him preach for further trial, whereunto I gave my consent, seeing no reason wherefore I could deny it. But he is not as yet settled amongst us as our minister by a formal and solemn call for that effect. Howbeit, for the time, I know not of any ground that will be for excepting against it; for I hear that he preaches very zealously and faithfully whither he goes, and carries strictly in administering the sacrament of baptism. And for mine own part, from his expressing himself at our Correspondence; I thought he seemed to have the right state of the cause, to have a right impression of the case of the church, to be tender-hearted and zealous in the frame of his spirit, particularly for the royalties of Christ, and again the idol of the Lord's jealousy, the ecclesiastic supremacy and civil tyranny.

As for our carriage towards the foresaid *Mr. Alexander Shields*, he having by the providence of God made

his escape out of prison, after a little space of time (without seeking after any party of ministers against whom we have exceptions) came to the country, unto this contending and suffering party. And at length upon the 5th of *December* 1686, came to a meeting which we had in *Galloway*, in the Wood of *Earlston*, for preaching; and so going alongst with me from thence, upon the day following, I told him, albeit I had some satisfaction concerning him from what I had seen under his own hand, and albeit I expected more by further converse with him; yet I thought it most rational in itself, most conducing to the preservation of union amongst us, and also according to the conclusion of our General Meeting, *viz.* that nothing which concerns the whole should be done without acquainting them therewith; that the foresaid Mr. *Alexander* should not be employed in the public work until he came to the General Correspondence, that all might be satisfied anent him: which he did take very well, and desired us to take that method with him which we would do with any backslidden minister, if God should touch his heart and bring him out from his defections unto the public work. Howbeit, we thought fit to employ him sometimes to go about family exercise, not seeing any reason why this should be forbore, for thereby we might attain to more clearness anent him. And indeed, in a certain family, where some neighbours (as is ordinary) were gathered unto the worship, I was greatly refreshed with what he spake from *Rom. xii. 12.* especially with what he had in prayer, with a heavy lamentation to this purpose; “I cannot
 “ longer contain, but I must confess unto the Lord be-
 “ fore this people, I am ashamed to offer my body a liv-
 “ ing sacrifice to thee, yet I must do it; for I a prisoner
 “ and preacher, might have been a martyr, and in glo-
 “ ry with thee and thy glorified martyrs above; but I
 “ sinfully and shamefully saved my life by disowning
 “ thy friends and owning thy enemies; and it will be a
 “ wonder if ever thou put such a honourable opportuni-
 “ ty in my hand again.” And very seldom did he go about exercise, but either in prayer, or in speaking from the scripture, he brake forth into heavy lamentations, confessing particularly his defections. So the time of our General Meeting coming, which was *December 22d*, as said is, the foresaid Mr. *Alexander* came to the same; and we did read over in his hearing (he being present
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with Mr. *David*) the introduction to our vindication, wherein are comprehended some special steps of our church's defection, and a brief declaration of our present testimony, both as to what we own and disown; together with the fifth head of the same vindication, containing, among other things, ten grounds, every one of which we judge sufficient for withdrawing from ministers of this covenanted and reformed church to whom they are applicable, in this broken and declining state. And then we asked Mr. *Alexander's* judgment concerning what he had heard, and whether or not he was of one mind with us as to every part of our present testimony. To which he replied, that he agreed cordially with us in all that he had heard, and particularly in the foresaid ten grounds, judging every one of them to bear a solidity and sufficiency in point of withdrawing. But, said he, there are some things there testified against, whereof I am guilty; and I will take a little time to unbosom myself unto you anent the same. So he began his confession with some pre-occupying cautions; desiring that none might think he was moved to what he was now about to do, from the affectations of applause from any man, or, that he might be in with a party (for he knew he would not want alluring employments if he had freedom to embrace it) but only that he might give God the glory, vindicate the cause, exoner his own conscience, and satisfy offended brethren: Intimating also, that he looked not upon the societies as competent for handling ecclesiastic matters, and that he knew, they did not assume the same unto themselves, though they were falsely branded therewith: Yet he held himself bound in duty, to declare with sorrow before them, wherein he had denied any part of the testimony which they did own. Then he proceeded to the particulars of his confession, and acknowledged:

1. That he had involved himself in the guilt of owning the (so called) authority of *James VII.* shewing an exceeding sinfulness in it, and taking shame unto himself.

2. He acknowledged himself guilty of taking the oath of abjuration, and of relapsing into the same iniquity; the sinfulness whereof he held out a great length, making it appear, that by that oath many orthodox principles which concern us greatly to contend for, are abjured. He declared the occasion of his being inveigled in these transgressions, was, the entering into an accommodation with the enemy; for he could propose nothing unto them but

they still added and yielded to it, until they got him a silly fish caught in their angle. Howbeit, hereby (as he said) he did not extenuate or excuse his sin, for, albeit he had as much to say for himself as any man could have, who had declared in such a measure, yet he would neither stifle his own conscience, nor blind the eyes of others; wherefore, he shewed both the sin and danger of entering upon any accomodation whatsoever with the enemy.

Now, he spoke largely to all these particulars, discovering such heinous and manifold sin therein, that, I think, none could have done it, unless they had known the terrors of the Lord: Shewing also the aggravations thereof, desiring every one to look upon their sin with the aggravating circumstances they can see in it: And he expressed so much sense and ingenuity, that none, I think, could require more of him, and I know not who would not have been satisfied as to the foresaids, who had heard him express himself so fully, so plainly, so freely, and with so much sense, grief, and self-condemning; and I thought it both singular and promising, to see a clergy-man come forth with such a confession of his own defections, when so few of that set are seen in our age to be honoured with the like.

So Mr. *Alexander* being desired to remove, we communed together about what we heard, and all declared, they found themselves satisfied as to the foresaids. After this, it was consulted amongst us, what was necessary to desire for our further satisfaction anent him; and we judged it expedient to enquire how and by whom he was licensed to preach; whereupon I having conferred with him before thereanent, gave a brief account thereof; and signified that a considerable while ago, I saw it under his own hand, that if the business of his licence were to be done yet, he would neither take it from such persons, neither would they give it him; and that of late he had said unto myself, that he knew not one of these who had granted it, that now he could concur with.

However, we thought it convenient to call himself, that he might give an account thereof before us all; which he did; showing that he went to *London* with an intention to be an amanuensis to *Owen*, or some of their great doctors, who were writing books for the press, and had a letter of recommendation to one, Mr. *Blackie* a
Scottish

Scottish minister, who trusted him to speak with him a certain season, and had several ministers convened, unknown to Mr. *Alexander*, and did press and enjoin him to take licence; so, he being carried unto it in that sudden and surprising way, he accepted it from the hands of Scottish ministers then at *London*, but without any impositions or sinful restrictions.

However, a little after, the oath of allegiance becoming the trial of that place, the foresaid Mr. *Alexander* studied, as he had occasion in preaching, plainly and satisfiably to discover the sin of it; which was so ill taken by the ministers by whom he was licensed, that they threatened and sought to stop his mouth, but he refused to submit unto them.

Now, to this very purpose was the relation that Mr. *Alexander* himself gave. So, considering what is before related, the societies for themselves, and I, with the concurrence of some elders then present, did call him to officiate in preaching the word to the suffering Remnant of this church. Wherefore, upon the Sabbath following he and I did preach together, he having his text, 2 Cor. v. 11. in these words in the former part of the verse, *viz. Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.* In which preaching, I may say, he particularly asserted every part of our present testimony, both as to non-compliance with enemies, non-concurrence with defective parties, and disowning the pretended authority of *James VII.* and also doctrinally confessed his own particular defections; and cried out, that *knowing the terror of the Lord* in these things, he *persuaded men.* And having appointed a fast upon the *Thursday* following, I briefly drew up about the number of forty four causes of humiliation, omitting no piece of defection of old or of late, that I knew or could remember, which causes he cordially agreed with, and expressed the same publicly in his preaching before the congregation, declaring every one of them to be a great cause of humiliation; and confessed again his own defections, holding forth the sin thereof to be very heinous, with much sorrow and regret. So I find Mr. *Alexander* to be one with us in our present testimony; I look upon him as having the zeal of God in his spirit, and the poor remnant have much of his heart; and I think the Lord is with him, and he cannot be challenged as deficient in the application of his doctrine; and for mine own part,
I have

I have been refreshed with hearing of him, and have been animated to zeal by his preaching and discourse.

There was a letter presented to and read at this meeting, from some friends in Ireland; to which an answer was earnestly desired. Though the meeting resolved to return an answer, yet it was not done till afterward.

It was resolved that the 16th of February thereafter should be observed by the societies a day of thanksgiving unto the Lord; blessing and praising him for his mercies bestowed on us at this meeting; and praying that he would give grace to improve the same rightly to his glory and praise. And also, that he will be graciously pleased in his mercy and condescendency to lead and direct them what to do in the matters to be treated of in the next meeting, so as it may be for his glory and the advantage of his cause.

And it was resolved that the next General Meeting shall convene at *Frierminion*, upon the 2d day of *March*, 1687.

In this interval the adversaries changed a little their method of working, to bring to pass their wicked design of enslaving the nation and introducing Popery; for, not getting the penal laws rescinded and removed by act of parliament, that so Papists might ascend to places of power and trust, and have liberty to exercise their idolatry without controul; they fell upon another method to effectuate the same design, which was by virtue of absolute power claimed and blasphemously arrogated by the Duke of York, (alias K. James) to stop and disable them, in a proclamation, and to grant a toleration to Papists and Quakers. But that it might pass the better, and to make all secure, liberty was granted to moderate Presbyterians to exercise their religion, yet with such restrictions and under such conditions as it was not embraced. In the mean time, Papists were advanced, and priests and jesuits, these locusts of the bottomless pit, did swarm up and down the country, and exercised idolatry publicly and freely without trouble.

But as the poor wanderers were excluded from this toleration, being among those who frequented field-meetings, who with the preachers at them, as also assistants of, or connivers at them, were by this proclamation,

tion ordained to be prosecuted according to the utmost severity of laws made against them ; so this exclusion was no grief to them, (they being resolved to accept of none of their favours, though never so fairly bulked) but rather looked upon by them as their mercy.

ACCORDING to the appointment of the last meeting, A General Meeting convened at *Frierminion*, upon the 2d of *March* 1687.

As was usual, prayer was gone about, and the meeting modelled. A part of the day and of the two days following the *Informatory Vindication* was read over, and deliberately taken into consideration. Upon the last day, *viz.* March 4th, the meeting came to a conclusion about it ; and it was resolved by them that it should be printed and published : For the defraying the expences whereof, they agreed upon 120 pound Scots ; and desired that Mr. Alexander Shields would oversee the printing of it.

In compliance with this desire, Mr. Shields went abroad, first to London, where he essayed to get it printed ; but failing thereof, he went to Holland and got it done. After this was printed, and he had expeded some other business, he returned to Scotland*.

It was resolved also by this meeting, that the Letter agreed to by the last meeting to be sent to some friends in Ireland, which had not yet been done, should now be written and sent.

Accordingly it was drawn up, and sent after this meeting ; a true copy whereof follows :

To Friends in Ireland.

*Loving Friends, and dearly Beloved in our Lord
Jesus Christ,*

March 2d, 1687.

WE received your kind and Christian letter, very refreshful and acceptable to us ; not only because

* Together with Mr. Alexander, Michael Shields went also to the Netherlands, where they staid till near the end of the year, being both employed in writing the Hind let loose, and putting it to the press there, as appears by letters from them both to Mr. Hamilton, excusing themselves for not visiting him, and desiring him to borrow and lend to them 300 gilders ; which he did.

cause coming from such who *have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*, and whom we respect as our brethren, under the same indissoluble bond of our holy covenants, engaged to concert the same cause and testimony for the precious interests of our princely Master; with whom we have desired a more close and intimate correspondence than hitherto we have obtained; and coming from such, at such a time, when we were groaning under that bitter grievance, among many others, of being deprived of, and sequestered from that desirable and much desired comfort of communion with our brethren in other churches, which we could not enjoy as we desired because of the universal decay of love, zeal and sympathy, every where too visibly decreasing, and because of the many odious and invidious obloquies we and our cause have been aspersed with, which yet we find hath not got so credulous entertainment with you, as to block up your hearts, and bind up your hands from shewing such tender affection toward us as ye discover in your letter; but also, because of the manner of its conveyance by a hand very welcome to us, wherein you demonstrate no small care and concern to be informed of our case and cause, in that you spare no pains to purchase the understanding of it. And chiefly your letter was very grateful to us, because of the matter of it; relishing so much of a gospel spirit of sympathy with us in our conflicts of sufferings and contentings for truth and duty, and of a savoury sense of our worthies witnessings for the regalities of our royal Master, which they sealed with their bonds and blood; and of heart-affecting grief, condoling the misery of our unhappy divisions, and of love to us prompting you to such a serious solicitousness to be informed of our integrity to the sworn truths, and of our way in the Lord, the better to stop the calumnies of adversaries, and of zeal for the common cause, in expressing your desire to keep up harmony with us in pursuance of the ends of the Covenants and acts of venerable Assemblies, and that the mouths of liars may be stopped. The fragrantcy of which graces that your letter did favour of, did very much endear it to us, and incites us to some earnest diligence (as our uncertain wanderings would allow) to endeavour a speedy return. But in confidence of your kind construction we must apologize with regret, that
neither

neither our condition for the time will admit, nor our capacity will furnish us with so speedy and satisfactory an answer to send you as we desire; and therefore must intreat your favour, both for our shortness in the abrupt abridgment of our answer, and for our longfomeness in sending.

It would be tedious both for you and for us, to give a full deduction of the manifold tracts and steps, travels and traversings, ups and downs we have had in our conflicts and contendings with open enemies and professed friends, with cruelty and craft, with rage and reproach, with censures and calumnies, with persecutors of hand and persecutors of tongue, with defection and division, with the extremes of left-hand declensions and right-hand extravagancies, in our continued (and yet, through mercy uninterrupted) course of our weak wrestlings against the corruptions of the times, and the indignities done to our Lord Jesus Christ and his crown prerogatives. We must refer the more ample account of these to our *Informatory Vindication* we propose to emit, and also to send to you as soon as the times difficulties will permit us: Only at the time, to answer your desire in some measure, that you may be informed about these reports of our animosities fallen out among ourselves; and how it comes, and why it is, that now in our land that *Judab* should fight against *Judab* even at Jerusalem, which causes your spirits to faint to hear the reports of it, we would in some short hints and open-hearted ingenuity give you to understand something of the causes and effects, rise and result of these animosities, and what our carriage hath been under these dissensions, and of our present abstraction amidst these distractions, whence it sprang and where it stands with us.

Though we be most unworthy of the honour, and very uncapable and insufficient for the work of prosecuting a testimony for the covenanted work of reformation of this once renowned church; yet it hath ever been, and still is our ambition and endeavour to aim at it, and insist in the footsteps of the most zealous and faithful promoters of it that have gone before us, and to advance in it as they left it without any abandoning or foregoing any part of it, or altering (further than that progress or rather application to our present case the times have called us to make) so that however we be reproached with new principles and practices which we have forged

and fostered to maintain our new way, as many even of our backsliding brethren do call our present testimony; yet we can truly say, we know of none that we have espoused either contrary to the venerable church constitutions in our best and purest times, or contradictory to what our ministers preached before these divisions began, or to what we ourselves professed when united with them, who now brand us with the odious characters of janglings and schismatics, which we will not now stand to refute by recriminations, but can easily vindicate ourselves from it by a naked deduction of the controversy as managed by us since the first rise of it.

Our testimony hath been in some measure continued and propagated ever since the fatal catastrophe of overturning the work of reformation by the re-introduction of tyranny, supremacy and Prelacy, since which time we have always designed and desired to adhere to and embark with such ministers and professors as did from time to time zealously withstand and witness against the several successive gradations of this national revolt from the Lord, and were incorporated with the body of them that did bear and follow the Lord's standard in the field-preaching before Bothwel; with whom we had sweet and soul-satisfying communion, while their *feet were beautiful upon the mountains, bringing glad tidings, publishing salvation*, and proclaiming as heralds, that *Zion's King reigned*; while they jeoparded their lives in the high places of the fields with us in the work of the Lord, in negotiating a treaty of reconciliation between the Lord and us; shewing forth all the counsel of God to us, and all the causes of his contendings with us, and pressing us to all the duties of the day necessary for keeping up the testimony and bringing our King back again to the land, whom our provocations had banished. For which end they inculcated upon us our covenant-engagements to keep and contend for the word of the church of Scotland's patience, to wrestle against all the encroachments made upon our Master's kingdom, and to weep over all the indignities done unto his name by this apostate and malignant party, revolted from, and rebelling against him, and to stand at the farthest from all countenancing of, or complying with them, or strengthening their hands by hearing of the curates, or answering their courts, or transacting with them any manner of way, in taking their ensnaring bonds or oaths, (whereof we had

had many then imposed of the same nature with these forged since, though now more universally accepted) or in paying their iniquitous exactions for maintaining them in their wickedness, professedly imposed and required for that end ; yea, when many of our much honoured watchmen spared not to set their trumpet to their mouth and cry against all the defections of their brethren impartially, particularly against all that church rending and ruining defection of the acceptance of that indulgence, the bastard brat of that blasphemous supremacy, then our souls were refreshed in going along with them : But when self-credit and interest did engage some to take the patrociny of that step of defection, and preposterous prudence and respect to peace with prejudice of truth did prompt others to palliate and daub it, we adhered to these that faithfully continued to contend against it ; who, for their so doing were much contemned and condemned ; and some of them in fundry Presbyteries were censured and rebuked : Yet we did not break off communion with those who were then labouring to quench our zeal and cool our fervour against that Christ-dishonouring sin, though at that time we were much discourtenanced by them, but endeavoured to go on with the testimony, both against the defection and the tyrant's usurpation upon Christ's crown, thereby explicitly exauclorated, from which it had its rise ; and accordingly the testimony at *Rutherglen* was emitted *May 29th*, 1676. against the declaration condemning our covenants, the act for keeping that anniversary day for the setting up the Usurper, and against other wicked acts made against the interest of Christ in the land, which were then publicly burnt ; which is now condemned by many that then approved and applauded it.

After which, when in prosecution of the same testimony, the Lord favoured us with a notable victory at *Drumclog*, that expedition of *Bothwell* following thereupon, was broken by a holy provoked God for our sins, by occasion of our divisions and confusions, fomented by the opposers of our testimony wherein we were united before some ministers and others favouring the indulgence did contend for inserting the interest of the usurping indulger in the state of the quarrel, and opposed the inserting of the indulgence as it was obtruded and accepted, among the causes of humiliation, that we then pleaded for as a necessary duty that appearance called

for. Whereupon followed that lamentable overthrow wherein much precious blood was shed, and many of our dear brethren were led in triumph captives by the insulting enemy; some of them sealed that testimony we then contended for with their blood; others of them refusing the insnaring indemnity (condemning that and all other appearances as sin) and the bond of peace then tendered as the test of that compliance, were banished; and in their voyage murdered, by being shut up under hatchets when the ship was lost. Many came off by taking that bond, being tempted by the persuasions of some ministers and the silence of others who refused to give their advice. At which time, a number of our ministers formed themselves into an assembly, wherein they voted for a new indulgence with the Cautionary Bond, in some respects more derogatory to Christ's prerogative and the gospel's liberty than the former; and from that time such as had not the benefit of the indulgence, in homologation of that imposition, did confine their preaching within doors or near houses, that that shadow of obedience might be a scone for their protection. Then did our perplexities begin that did much astonish us, and brought us to our wits end; Yet did not our hunger after the ordinances abate, but we adhered to the few ministers we had that would concur and venture in the work of the gospel. And when Mr. *Richard Cameron* used all diligence and patience in inviting and inciting others of his brethren then lurking, to a concurrence, he could not obtain it; yet with the concurrence he had and our adherence, he went on with the testimony both against enemies usurpations and the shameful and sinful yieldings of his brethren thereunto. And accordingly, considering the wickedness, usurpations and tyranny of the late tyrant, then raging as a roaring lion and ranging bear over the poor people, imposing upon their consciences, robbing, spoiling and pillaging their possessions, hunting and cruelly handling, imprisoning, torturing, butchering and murdering their bodies for conscience of duty; affronting and defying the Most High GOD, in heaven-daring wickedness, inverting, perverting and diverting the ordinance of magistracy; and destroying all laws and liberties, all securities of mankind, and overturning the whole work of reformation, breaking and burning the covenant with God and compact with the people, and arrogating to himself a blasphemous supremacy

macy over the church of Christ : he did, with the concurrence and adherence aforesaid, publish a Declaration at *Sanquhar*, June 22d, 1680. disowning and disclaiming the tyrant ; and in some expectation of a further capacity, did declare a war against him, and all that took his part. But, instead of that obliged concurrence which ministers ought to have given to this testimony so stated, this action and the owners thereof were generally condemned by them : and being so deserted and abandoned of them, in the holy providence of God, we lost that worthy standard-bearer, and many other worthies, at *Air's-moss* ; where many died valiantly fighting for that testimony, others were taken and barbarously butchered, hanged, and quartered, sealing the same with heroic courage, and the countenance of the Lord signally shining upon them, who yet, by the opposers of our testimony, tho' professed friends to the cause, were condemned as dying foolishly, upon insufficient grounds.

Then had we none to concur with us but worthy Mr. *Donald Cargill*, of whom the land and we were not worthy ; and therefore shortly after this, the Lord deprived us of him likewise, and gave him the crown of martyrdom, in owning the same testimony. That was a day of our perplexity and treading down in our valley of vision. Then the word of the Lord was precious, and there was no open vision ; the standard was fallen, and there was none to take it up, of all the ministers that were then in the land ; tho' they had many reiterated calls from several corners, yet none would come forth to preach publicly, but sitting and slighting or shifting our calls, did either lurk in the land, or went abroad and deserted their work. Whence, being left in that darkness, many went astray to the right and left hand. On the one hand, *John Gib* and his accomplices discovered their wild extravagances, to the reproach of the way of God. On the other hand, many deserted our testimony, and made defection unto the time's compliances ; and generally all were jumbled into such confusions, that scarcely could one understand the language of another, or know who concurred in the testimony : But in that extremity, the Lord made some instrumental to gather us together in a General Correspondence ; where this method was fallen upon, which we have hitherto kept up, of meeting together from all the societies of our embodied community, to understand one another's minds about

about the duties or sins of the times, and to encourage one another, and to do all things jointly, by mutual advice and common consent, in prosecution of the common testimony, which we call our General Meeting; which proved in some measure encouraging to us. For immediately, upon the first commencement hereof, tho' when we were few in number and destitute of pastors, another declaration was published at *Lanerk*, *January 12th*, 1682. confirming the former and further testifying against the reception of the duke of *York*, and admitting him to preside in parliament, and against the test, &c. which declaration did set us more alone, and made us more the butt of enemies malice, and of our brethren's contempt than any thing formerly; for from thenceforth, many did more declaredly oppose us, and informed against us both at home and abroad; laying heavy things, which we knew not, to our charge, without either trying the truth of them, or taking pains to admonish us of them.

Wherefore, in the next General Meeting, we fell to deliberate how our case might be represented, and our cause vindicated to strangers; and we resolved to send some abroad to make it known that we adhered to all the principles of the true Presbyterian church of Scotland, in its doctrine, worship, discipline and government; after which by special providence, a door being opened for the instruction of some students at a college in the *Netherlands*, we sent some young men thither to study; and in process of time received back Mr. *James Renwick* an ordained minister, who hath hitherto laboured among us in the work of the gospel, not without a seal of his ministry through the Lord's blessing; however it be opposed and despised of men. After which, the fury and violence of enemies were let loose upon us, as well as the scourge of tongues, to the effusion of much of the precious blood of our brethren, and the bondage and banishment of others; and wicked acts were given out for all to apprehend us wherever we could be found, and to raise the hue and cry after us, inhibiting all to respect or correspond any manner of way with us, under the severest penalties, which brought us to great straits, and even to desperate extremity, without any probable hope of relief, by reason of the enemy's vigilancy, the country's readiness to obey, (being already much wasted with oppression, and fearing greater devastations) and the
wick.

wicked malice of many intelligencers and informers, whence we were necessitated to put forth another declaration, affixed on several market crosses and church doors, *November* — 1684. confirming and explaining the former, and vindicating us and our testimony from some odious aspersions, to the intent to deter and scar the country from giving intelligence of us: which, though it did screw up our trial to a greater height than ever, (the enemies bloody cut-throats having a commission to murder us wherever they met with us) and though it proved a snare to many, while an oath abjuring the same was generally pressed thro' the country, in very smooth and subtle terms, which cozened many; yet it deterred many from their former diligence in informing against us, and also drew out some to join with us, even some who had taken that oath of abjuration, when they had discovered the guilt of it in their wounded consciences. However, we cannot recount the number of our dear brethren that we lost in this deluge of blood that was shed at this time by soldiers, and some gentlemen, that made it their work to kill us wherever we could be found, without either trial or sentence, or time to prepare for death, or respect to age or sex; even women, some of a very young, some of an old age being drowned in their fury. But in the mean time in the height of this rage, the Lord did remove the tyrant *Charles II.* which did put some stop to it.

Thereafter, when his brother *James* duke of *York* was proclaimed, and a parliament convocated for establishing him in his usurpation, we resolved upon a testimony against the same; and so emitted another declaration at *Sanquhar*, *May* 28th, 1685. not only protesting against the foresaid usurpation, contrary to our covenanted reformation and laws of the country; but giving our testimony against all kinds of papistry in general and particular heads, as is exprest in our National Covenants. This was done in the mean time of the earl of *Argyle's* expedition, with which we were much pressed to concur, and many embodied with us were drawn away with the importunity of some ministers and others of that association; yet we could not join with them, nor espouse their declaration as the state of their quarrel, because it was not concerted, according to the ancient plea of the *Scottish* Covenanters, against both right and left hand opposites, in defence of our reformation, expressly according

to our Covenants, National and Solemn League; because no mention is made of our covenants, nor of Presbyterian government, which was of purpose lest the Sectarians should be irritated; because it opened a door for a confederacy with Sectarians and malignants, of which malignants they had some among them guilty of shedding our blood at *Air's-moss*.

After the defeat of this expedition, in answer to the desire of some ministers, who came over with *Argyle*, we had a conference with them, *July 22d, 1685*. in which, instead of allaying differences, the proposals that were made for union did heighten our breaches, both with them and among ourselves, as did appear by the consequents; herein though they offered accommodations, yet in conference to bring it about, they mentioned and did not disown that which bred alienation, *viz.* a previous information they had sent to strangers, accusing us of heavy things, that we had not only cast off all magistrates in Scotland; but had constituted among ourselves all kinds of magistrates, and were for cutting off all as open enemies, who did not acknowledge our imaginary government; that our societies were only an erroneous faction, and have no power of calling pastors, &c. which information, so full of calumnies, though they did extenuate, alledging that the copy of it which we produced was forged, yet they confessed some such information was written, and went on to prosecute, in effect, the same crimination; and said, they excerpted all out of our public papers: and further challenged us, for falsely accusing them in our protestation against the *Scottish* congregation at *Rotterdam*; where they with others were promiscuously charged with sundry things in *cumulo*, which they were not guilty of. We confessed it was an oversight conjointly to accumulate these charges without distinction; but taking them separately, we offered to make out every thing there charged upon the names inserted. - And further, in inveighing against *Mr. Renwick's* ordination, they accused the church of *Holland* of *Erastianism*, and many other corruptions: To which he only replied, that he had received his ordination from the Presbytery of *Groningen*, and they being foreigners, and not chargeable either with our defections, or any declining from the testimony of their own church, but advancing, and groaning under some corruptions from
which

which they were never reformed, would come under another consideration than ministers of our own church defending a course of defection; howbeit, as he protested in the face of the Presbytery, when he received ordination, against all things he knew among them dissonant to the work of reformation of the church of Scotland; so he told his purpose to inform that venerable Presbytery how they were represented in Scotland; and if they could not clear themselves, at least, of some of the grossest of these things, he would be willing to acknowledge before such as were competent, that he had offended in meddling with them.

The accommodation which they offered, was upon terms, which we thought destructive to our testimony, to lay aside all debates, and let by-gones pass, and go on in the public work; which we did not think was the way to heal our sore: But we offered if differences and exceptions could be removed in a right and honest way, we would be most willing to join with them; which exceptions were given in, in these particulars following, viz. Their leaving the country and deserting the public work, when it was so necessary to concur in the testimony, but condemning it in *Sanguhar* and *Lanerk* Declarations, even as to the matter of them; and not condemning the paying of the locality imposed for maintaining soldiers against the work and people of God; their countenancing the compliers of the time, while in the land, and when abroad; joining with the *Scottish* congregation at *Rotterdam*, and hearing the indulged preach there; then, informing against us, and aspersing us with slanders, such as these in the forementioned information; and then, concurring with the earl of *Argyle's* association, against which we had so many things to object, as above hinted. Which exceptions (though among the least we have against many other ministers, with whom we have no clearness to join in our now circumstances, yet) we thought sufficient to demur upon; when, after many fruitless janglings, we could receive no satisfaction about them, nor a public testimony satisfiably stated, wherein we might both agree and concur; so the conference broke up. And thereafter we were more untenderly dealt with by them; and also deserted by many embodied with us in fellowship, who from that time left off coming to our General Meetings, and to take separate ways, without respect to our former consented a-

agreements; and also did hear, receive, and spread abroad some false reports given forth against us, without premonishing us about the same; and drew many off from our societies by such means. With some of which we had a conference, *January* 28th, 1686. who said they had a verbal commission from some societies in *Carri- rick, &c.* the effect whereof (whatever was the intent of their coming) tended to a further breach, though we were not conscious to ourselves of any untender dealing with them. For first, we did endeavour to remove all supposed grounds upon which they might stumble into alienation from us, by clearing our minds about all these things the ministers laid to our charge: then several questions of weight about our present differences were propounded to the meeting, about a letter of accusation spread against us, which they did not positively disclaim; and about *Argyle's* declaration, which they would own or disown, accordingly as it was diversely interpreted; about the exceptions given in against the ministers, which they alledged were not valid; and finally, we asked the foresaid persons, whether or not they were clear to join with us in general and particular fellowships, now when they had heard us speak our minds so freely? this they refused to answer, putting the question back. Whether or not we would join with them? and generally in all these questions they declined freedom and plainness, and seemed averse from satisfying us, and to be rather for contending, than a free communing for union; chiefly they stickled about a general conclusion previously agreed to and resolved upon among us, That nothing relative to the public, and concerning the whole of us, should be done without the consent, or at least the knowledge of the whole; which conclusion, though formerly they agreed to, yet now they called an imposition; alledging that hereby they might not hear a faithful minister when occasion offered; though we told them, we did not take that conclusion in an absolute sense, as a restriction simply necessary, for all times, all places, all persons, things and cases; and in necessary duties, if the rest shall sinfully deny their concurrence, they proponing it, may lawfully without breach of the conclusion, do it for themselves; but in points doubtful and controverted, it is necessary for advising and deliberating, as a hedge against precipitancy and rashness, useful for preservation of union, excluding confusion, curbing petulant spirits, and for

for the right management of affairs. In fine, for the result of this conference, when we were urged as above, whether we would join with them as formerly, by way of retortion to our proposals of the same to them; we told them, we could not answer in name of our societies, having no direction from them for that effect; and that for our own parts, we would not refuse accidental or occasional communion with them as brethren and Christians; but in the present circumstances, we could not be clear to concur with them as formerly, in carrying on the public work harmoniously, and habitually, until our exceptions were removed; which were, their breaking that conclusion of brotherhood formerly condescended to, in their calling ministers against whom we had exceptions unremoved, without acquainting us therewith; in their drawing together in arms without our knowledge, and contrary to what was concluded by themselves with our and their friends: their residing with other persons in points of disagreement against us.

Whereupon, they broke away abruptly; and their carriage since hath been very disengaging, and discovered a great deal of alienation from us, by their labouring many ways to represent us unto the world to make us odious, in their informations given in to ministers against us, and by their protesting against and hindering Mr. *James Renwick* to enter their borders, yea, refusing to communicate with him so much as in family-worship, albeit it was sometime far otherwise, when they agreed with us in their testimony against Papists, malignants, Sectaries, and backsliders. But now we must bear many obloquies from them and others, waiting in dependance on the Lord's vindication, who will bring forth our righteousness, or rather the righteousness of his own cause by us maintained, as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day; and in the mean time, carry ourselves abstractly, and let them be saying, we must always be aiming at doing.

Now, dear Brethren, we have thus far, with all unfeigned freedom, unbowed before you the naked account of our contendings, in short hints, without all prevarication, or taking advantage of your unacquaintedness to represent our cause better than it is. We shall now shut up our letter with a brief declaration of our testimony which we now stand and suffer for, and of the principles that we own and disown.

We do therefore testify our holding and adhering to the written word of God, as the only rule of faith and manners, and all the received principles of this reformed church, founded thereupon, and consonant thereunto; as, our Confession of faith, Catechisms Larger and Shorter, Covenants National and Solemn League, Acknowledgment of Sins, and Engagement to Duties, the Causes of God's Wrath, &c. We adhere unto the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this reformed church, as we are covenanted to maintain; and to all the acts and proceedings of our general assemblies for promoting the reformation.

We own and adhere unto all the faithful testimonies of the church, or of any of its faithful members or officers, former, old or later, particular or more general: against the public resolutions, *Cromwel's* usurpation, and toleration of sects and heresies in his time, before the overturning, and since; against Prelacy, supremacy, or the compliances and defections of ministers and professors; particularly, we own the *Rutherford's*, *Sanquhar*, and *Lanerk* Declarations, and the late Apologetical Declaration against intelligencers and informers.

We own all the duties professed and profecuted by the faithful, for the promoval and defence of these testimonies; as, preaching in the fields, and defending the same by arms, and appearing in a declared war against the public enemies of this kirk and kingdom, at *Pentland*, *Drumclog*, *Bothwell*, and *Air's-moss*; and all suffering upon the account of these, or any part of non-conformity, with the God-provoking courses of the time.

We disown and obtest whatsoever, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, is against, beyond, or beside the written word of God; all damnable heresy, as, Quakerism, Popery, Libertinism, Antinomianism, Arminianism, Socinianism, and all other under whatsoever designation; together with the wild extravagances of *John Gib*; as also, all kinds of idolatry, superstition and profaneness; all sects upon the right hand, as, Anabaptism, Independency, Millenarianism, and all other sects and schisms, and devisive courses: and on the left hand, we disown and detest Prelacy and Erastianism, and whatsoever else is contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness; and all countenancing of or complying with Prelacy, supremacy, or tyranny, or any usurpation

pation upon church or state made by this malignant enemy; all hearing of curates or indulged, or paying either of them stipends enacted by iniquitous laws setting them up; all answering to the courts of persecutors, taking any of their oaths, as the Declaration, Test, the oath of Abjuration, or any other oaths of supremacy or allegiance; subscribing any of their bonds, as the Bond of Peace, Bond of Regulation, the Bond of Appearance, or any other of that nature; paying any of their wicked impositions, as Militia-money, Cefs, Locality, or Fines, or any thing that may strengthen the hands of such evil doers. As also, we discountenance all the steps of defection, declining from, or contradictory to our fore-mentioned testimony; and disown all association and confederacies with malignants or secretaries.

But more particularly, because our principles are most suspected upon the ordinances of magistracy and ministry, therefore we shall plainly unbosom our hearts about these also.

We profess then concerning magistracy, That as it is not founded subjectively upon grace, so it is a holy divine institution for the good of human society, the encouragement of virtue and curbing of vice, competent unto, and honourable among both Christians and Heathens. And for such magistrates as being rightful and lawfully constituted over us, do act as the ministers of God, in a due line of subordination to God, in the defence of our covenanted reformation and the subjects liberties, we will own, embrace, obey and defend them to the utmost of our power.

In church-matters, we allow the magistrate a power over the outward things of the church, but not over the inward things, as doctrine, worship, discipline and government.—We allow him the custody of both the tables of the law, and a power to punish corporally all offenders (even church-officers) against the same; not under the consideration of a scandal, but of a crime.—We allow him a power of ordering the well-being of the church; and in some cases of convocating Synods, *præ re nata*, besides their ordinary meetings, and being present there, but not to preside in their debates; and of adding their civil sanction to synodical results, but no power to restrain them in the power Christ hath given them.—We allow him a cumulative power to assist, strengthen

then and ratify what church-officers do, by virtue of their office; but not a privative power to detract any way from the church's authority.—We allow him an imperative power to command church-officers to do their duty, but not an elective power, either to do himself what is incumbent on church-officers, or to depute others to do in his name, or by any ministerial power received from him.

Finally, We grant this to be the full extent of the magistrate's supremacy in church-affairs, to order whatever is commanded by the God of Heaven, that it may be diligently done for the house of the God of Heaven; and what further he may usurp, we disown and detest.

But in things civil, though we do not say that every tyrannical act makes a tyrant, yet we hold, that habitual, obstinate and declared opposition to, and overturning of religion, laws and liberties, and making void all contracts with the subjects, intercepting and interdicting all redress by supplications or otherwise, doth sufficiently invalidate his right and relation of magistracy, and warrant subjects, especially in covenanted lands, to revolt from under, and disown allegiance to such a power; yet they may not lawfully arrogate to themselves that authority which the tyrant hath forfeited, or act judicially either in civil or criminal courts: only they may do that which is necessary for securing themselves, liberty and religion.

But for the late tyrant, as we did disown and do detest the memory of his first erection and unhappy restoration, after, by many evidences, he was known to be an enemy to God and the country; of his nefarious wickedness in ejecting the ministers of Christ from their charges, and introducing abjured Prelacy; his atrocious arrogance in rescinding all acts for the work of reformation; his unparalleled perfidy and perjury in breaking, making void and burning the Covenants; his heaven-daring usurpation in arrogating to himself that blasphemous supremacy; his audacious and treacherous exerting of that usurped power in giving indulgences to outed ministers to divide and destroy the church; his tyranny over the consciences of poor people, pressing them to conformity with the time's abominations, and imposing upon them conscience-debauching oaths: his tyranny over the whole land, in levying militia and other forces for carrying on his wicked designs of advancing himself

self to arbitrary absoluteness, and imposing wicked exactions for their maintenance, professedly required for suppressing religion and liberty; his cruelty over the bodies of Christians, in chasing and killing upon the fields many without sentence, and bloody butchering, hanging, heading, mangling, dismembering alive, quartering upon scaffolds, imprisoning, laying in irons, torturing by boots, thumbkins, fire-matches, cutting pieces out of the ears of others, banishing and selling as slaves old and young men and women in great numbers; oppressing many others in their estates, forfeiting, robbing, spoiling, pillaging their goods, casting them out of their habitations, interdicting any to reset them under the pain of being treated after the same manner: So for the continued and habitual trade of these and many other acts of tyranny, we did disown, and do yet adhere to our revolt from under the yoke of his tyranny.

And for the same reasons we disown the usurpation of *James Duke of York*, succeeding and insisting in the same footsteps of tyranny, treachery and cruelty, and labouring to bring these lands in subjection again to the yoke of Antichrist, being a professed Papist, and therefore by many laws of this land incapable of bearing any rule.—And here we stand as to the point of magistracy.

Concerning the ministry, we own the lawfulness and the necessity of that ordinance, against Quakers and all its opposers; and hold it our duty to obey and encourage all faithful pastors, and highly to honour them in love for their work's sake. And we hold it unlawful for any man, though never so well qualified, to take upon him the work of the ministry without licence and ordination by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, or any competent number of these to whom Christ hath committed the power of the keys. And we hold, that the power of church-government and discipline, and every part of the ministerial function does not appertain to Pope, Prelate, magistrate nor multitude of believers, but only to the officers of Christ's appointment, as the subject and receptacle of all such power.

We therefore profess our sincere respect unto, and will own and embrace all such ministers as are clothed with Christ's commission in his orderly and appointed way; all such as are clothed with righteousness and salvation, confirming and adorning their doctrine by their practice;

practice ; all such as are found, spiritual and orthodox in their doctrine, holding forth the word of life in incorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned, and are faithful in the discharge of their commission, *crying aloud, and not sparing, shewing Jacob his sins, and Israel his transgressions* ; constant and instant in their work, *in season and out of season, reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all long-suffering and patience*, making full proof of their ministry.—Yea further, we will withdraw from no ministers upon such insufficient grounds as their infirmities, their different judgment or practice in things that are either indifferent or not material, or not contradictory to the testimony of the church of Scotland ; their ignorance of the state of our testimony, having no occasion to be informed thereof, which hath made them heretofore stand back from concurrence with us ; and even their real scandals, not attended with obstinacy, but confessed and forsaken.

But we judge we have sufficient ground to withdraw from all who cannot instruct their being clothed with Christ's call, in his orderly way, as the curates, &c. From all who have subjected their ministry to the disposal of strange lords, and taken a new holding from, and upon a new architectonic and usurped power in the exercise thereof, by accepting a new grant, licence and warrant from the usurper of their Master's crown ; as the indulged, &c : From all such who pervert and corrupt their ministry, by maintaining errors, either in doctrine, worship, discipline or government, contrary to the Scriptures and our Confessions and principles of our covenanted reformation and contradictory to our present testimony founded thereupon and agreeable thereunto ; From all ministers guilty of gross compliances with the public enemies of this covenanted and reformed church, who have broken the covenant, destroyed the reformation, usurped the prerogatives of Christ, and are still, and by all means seeking the extirpation of all the owners of the cause of God ; From such ministers who take the defence and patrociny of these courses, and palliate and plaister them, strengthening the hands and hardening the hearts of these who are engaged in them, so that none doth turn from these wicked things : From such ministers as are unfaithful in the exercise of the ministerial function, or in a smooth, general, flattering way, applying or rather misapplying their doctrine to the times :

times : From such as are sinfully silent, in deserting their duty and lying by from the public work of preaching the gospel, when the people's urgent necessity and pressing call doth make it indispensable, when people are destitute of all public warning, in the times when snares are most abounding, and the poor flock in the greatest hazard to be turned aside : From such as are schismatical, and pragmatistical dividers of the church and wideners of the breaches thereof, already broken and divided, sowing discord among brethren, and promoting their contentions : Finally, from all such as are scandalous and disorderly, either in their ministerial or personal walk : From all ministers that deserve these characters, we think we have sufficient grounds from scripture and acts of assemblies, to withdraw our communion.

And therefore, as we hold ourselves bound in conscience and duty, with all due respect to the ministry, and love to their persons, to bear witness and testify against the defections of the generality of the ministers of the church of Scotland, since the overturning of our reformation, and introduction of Prelacy ; their fainting, and not giving a testimony for the church's liberties against its destroyers at their first introduction ; their leaving their charges at their command ; their deficiency in not giving a testimony when the covenant was broken and burnt, nor when the supremacy was established ; their general lying by from their work, the poor people thereby wanting warning ; some accepting of the indulgence, others not witnessing against it, but pleading for it as no defection, or for union with the indulged ; their meeting in Presbyteries for the rebuking and censuring of the more faithful, who did witness against that sin ; their laying bonds on some young men not to speak of it ; their pleading for the Tyrant's interest at Bothwel ; their accepting of the Cautionary Bond, to observe his orders in preaching after Bothwel ; their persuading to, or not dissuading from taking many insinuating bonds and oaths imposed upon prisoners and others ; their leaving the work of preaching the gospel in the fields when they were most called to the duty, in a time of abounding snares from the right and left hand, and reproaching and condemning others who did jeopard and lose their lives in that work ; their complying with the enemies in bonding with their courts, (some to that length, as to come under obligations to forbear the exercise of their ministry) and

hearing of their curates ; their joining with such confederacies and associations that did open a door for the introduction of malignants and sectaries, contrary to our covenant-engagements ; and the like steps of defection, which we desire to mourn for. So, for these and the like defections we must withdraw from, and discountenance many of our ministers, whom otherwise we love and honour.

And seeing in these times of distempering confusions, we are now deprived of the remedy of these settled judicatories whereunto we might recur in the case, and yet are bound in our capacities to witness against these defections, whereby the wrath of our God is so much kindled against the land ; therefore we judge it lawful, reasonable and necessary, in this declining and disordered state of the church, to leave that part of the church which hath gone astray into such defections, whether ministers or professors, as to a joint concurrence in carrying on the public work, (and let them return to us, but we not to them) and to adhere to the other part of the church, ministers and professors, though fewer and weaker, who are standing stedfastly to the defence of reformation, witnessing against the declinings, until the defections of the backsliding party be confessed and forsaken ; wherein we altogether deny we can be charged with positive separation from the church of *Scotland* ; yea, nor negative separation, if it be considered actively : We only acknowledge a separation, passively considered, in our being left alone in the time of our greatest straits, and forsaken by the rest ; endeavouring, the mean while, with many failings and much weakness, to retain and maintain the covenanted work of reformation in all its parts, as it was attained unto in our best and purest times ; and chusing rather to stand still and walk alone, than to go along with others in declining and offensive courses.

Now, having also given you, in all well-meaning plainness, this declaration of our testimony, we shall not trouble you further, but conclude with a humble desire, That, as ye would weigh what we have said in the balance of truth and charity, so you would acquaint us with your sentiments of the same, and deal freely in admonishing us wherein you think we err, or go beyond, or come short of our duty. Your correspondence should be very acceptable and comfortable unto us : So, recommending

mending you to the grace and mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we rest

Your affectionate friends and brethren in the Lord,

Subscribed in our name, and by our direction, by the clerk of our General Meeting,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

A few days after this meeting, there were some causes of fasts drawn up, which were thought necessary to be observed by the Societies, wherewith they were to be acquainted; which was accordingly done. The causes follow.

The first was the 14th day of *April*, to be kept a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer unto the Lord for these causes.

1. The great dishonour done to God, and gross abominations contained in the late proclamation; such as, (1.) The casting and annulling the penal laws and statutes made against Papists. (2.) The introduction and toleration of Popery, and free liberty granted to Quakerism. (3.) The snares and restrictions offered to such ministers as the adversaries call moderate Presbyterians. (4.) The blasphemous encroachment of the tyrant upon the prerogative of God, in making and rescinding oaths at his pleasure; and in place of the former, now substituting a new oath, which is the sink of all their abominations, wherein he proclaims himself absolute and sovereign, (due only to God, and to no mortal) and will have acknowledgment as such, and men's consciences to be entirely surrendered to his lustful rage.

2. The danger wherein the faithful remnant do stand through the wickedness of the enemy, belching out cruel threatenings of utter destruction to all who will avouch, own or countenance the faithful and free preaching of the gospel.

3. The loathsome lukewarmness and indifferency of our societies in falling slack in religious duties, in not laying out themselves more in their stations for promoting the work of the Lord, and in forbearing (many of them) to carry arms at our solemn meetings, for the defence of the gospel, their brethren, and themselves.

It was also appointed that the 12th of May should be kept by our societies as a day of fasting and prayer to the Lord, for the causes following.

1. That the Lord would give us a right way of constituting and settling elderships, and that he would accompany with his blessing and power, these labourers whom he had sent forth to the public work, that their labours might be in mercy, and with success.

2. That he would carry on the business of the vindication, and make it effectual for gaining its end; And also that he would preserve these of our ministers who for the time were necessarily called out of the land, and restore them unto us, fraughted with his Spirit.

IN the year, 1687, The Cockatrice-egg was laid; which, if the Lord crush it not, threatens the production of the basilisk of popery itself; and that sleep-drink of this Antichristian intoxicating toleration was then brewed in hell, blinked in *Rome*, and propined to Scotland, as a preservative for the cup of the Whore's fornications; which did more bewitch and intoxicate the bulk and body of the Protestants and Presbyterians of all ranks and capacities, into a stupid submission to Antichrist's encroachments; a secure compliance with his designs to introduce popery and slavery; or a senseless surcease from all opposition to, or testimony against them, than any former attempt of *Babylon's* policy, or effort of her power, could ever effectuate in Scotland. When a toleration is offered, accepted, addressed for, and peaceably and thankfully improved, according to order; flowing from a blasphemous fountain, absolute power; which all are to obey without reserve; conveyed through a treasonable channel, suspending, stopping, and disabling all righteous statutes penal, against Papists; designed for such sinful ends, as the subversion of the protestant, and the peaceable introduction of the popish religion; producing such miserable effects, as, the encouragement of all wickedness, and error, extinguishing all zeal against them, and increase of defection, division and confusion; offered in such scandalous terms as palpably encroach upon the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of Christ's free kingdom, and plainly preclude all accession to any faithful protestation against these encroachments, consistent with the improvement of the liberty; and obtruded with such shameful

ful securities, as rob the church of all her legal charters of laws and covenants establishing her reformation, and leave her nothing in lieu thereof, but a blind promise of one, whose principles oblige him to keep no faith; and such a promise as does not establish the religion tolerated under the notion of religion; but tolerates it only, as a thing to be suffered. Yet this was generally complied with by the ministers and professors throughout the kingdom; and all such as did not say a confederacy with them in this, were houted at, and flouted as signs and wonders, on all hands; and more than ever exposed to the reproach of tolerated and indemnified friends, who had now purchased to themselves peace, at the rate of selling truth and shifting duty, and more than ever threatened by the persecuting enemies. For, in all their proclamations of peace and liberty to others, they thunder many menaces against them.

The first proclamation, February 12th, 1687. tolerating the moderate Presbyterians to meet in their private houses (excluding barns) &c. to hear the indulged ministers alienarly, ‘Certifies, That field-conventicles, and such as preach at them, or who shall any way assist or connive at them, shall be prosecuted according to the utmost severity of laws made against them.’ The second proclamation, June 28th, the same year, busking the hook better, that they might bite more kindly, allowing all to serve God after their own way in any house; so that, they take care that nothing be preached, which may any way tend to alienate the hearts of the people from the government, &c. makes express provision, that no meetings be in the open fields: For which, now after this royal favour, there could not be the least shadow of excuse left. Which meetings are strictly prohibited, and all laws and acts of Parliament left in full force and vigor, with a further command to all judges, magistrates and officers of forces, to prosecute such as should be found guilty of the said field-conventicles, with the utmost vigor. There was also a third proclamation, October 5th, declaring that all persons, preachers and hearers, present at any meeting in the open fields, shall be prosecuted with the utmost rigor and severity that their laws will allow. ‘As also, all dissenting ministers, who shall take upon them to preach in houses, without observing these directions prescribed (viz, That nothing be preached or taught, which may
‘ any

' any way tend to alienate the hearts of the people from
 ' the government, and that their meetings be peaceably
 ' and publicly held, and that they signify and make
 ' known to some one or more of the privy counsellors,
 ' sheriffs, stewarts, baillies, justices of peace, or magi-
 ' strates of burghs royal, what place or places, they set
 ' apart for these uses, with the names of the preachers)
 ' shall be so prosecuted.'

This proclamation was emitted after, and as it would
 seem, in answer to the address of some ministers dated
 at *Edinburgh*, July 21st, that same year, given forth in
 the name of all the Presbyterian ministers: Wherein,
 after a rhapsody of fulsome flatteries for the toleration,
 they beseech, that these who promote any disloyal prin-
 ciples or practices (as they disown them) may be looked
 upon as none of theirs, whatsoever name they may as-
 sume to themselves. A superplus of superfluous sollicit-
 ousness for these who adhering unto the testimonies of
 the church of Scotland, against toleration and tyranny,
 which they call disloyal principles and practices, would
 reckon it both a sin and shame to be reputed of their
 confederacy.

Against all the indignities done to Christ, and injuries
 done to the church, Mr. *Renwick* and his brethren
 thought themselves obliged to testify and witness; and
 not only declare against the sin of the givers, and of the
 accepters of such a toleration; but to warn also the peo-
 ple of the hazard of all their accession to it, participa-
 tion with it, or approbation of it, in their frequenting
 these meetings, under the allowance and protection of
 it, as being all the badges of their complying with it, or
 sign of their approving it, which either could be requir-
 ed of them, or given by them: And to keep their meet-
 ings for this end more publicly in the open fields, since
 they durst not trust those, who were still thirsting insa-
 tiably for their blood, nor give them such advantages as
 they were seeking to prey upon them, by shutting them-
 selves within houses; and looked upon this as their tes-
 timony for the cause of Christ, for the interest of the
 Protestant religion, for the covenanted reformation, and
 for the laws and liberties of the country, all undermined
 and subverted by this toleration.

In the beginning of the year, the other two had ne-
 cessary occasions calling for their departure forth of the
 land

land for a time; and then the whole stress and burden of that whole work lay upon him, and the whole force of the persecution from all hands was bended against him, and increased daily, as his zeal, freedom and faithfulness in witnessing against the toleration increased; especially in the obloquies and oppositions from the tolerated ministers, against him, increased apace; who ceased not to cry out against him, sometimes to the offence of their hearers, and all that heard the report of it. One of them at *Glasgow*, in a transport of fury rather than zeal, expressed himself to this effect, "He would not have been so grieved, if Mr. *Renwick* had stabbed first his father and then his brother, as now to hear him so rail against the liberty." It had been more pertinent for him to be grieved for the wounds and wramps, stabs and strokes his mother the church of Scotland hath received, and given by himself and others her untender children, by accepting of this falsely so called liberty, which hath given her *Joab's* salute and cruel courtesy, a stab under the fifth rib, and then left her in thrall and bondage.

It might have been expected rather now, when the storm was over, that those, who lurked under the lee, and durst not set their face against it, should have pitied at least, if not praised one, that endured the whole rage of it, in following the duty which they had shifted; than that they should come out of their warm holes, and upbraid and insult over their weary and weather-beaten fellow-servant. But the ministers now generally coming home from abroad, and out of their quiet chambers, and beginning to preach, set themselves to cry out against Mr. *Renwick*, and the poor persecuted people that heard him, being, as it would seem, more concerned to give a proof of their loyalty to please their new friends (enemies to their old Friend and Master Christ) than of their love and zeal to him, whose ambassadors they were, in resenting the wrongs done to his glory: And in this, they were abetted, encouraged and instigated by many professors; some of whom, in their calling ministers, have admonished them not to forget to preach against Mr. *Renwick*, &c. which, when one minister, a stranger to that method, and a stranger in the place where he was called to preach, viz. in *Glasgow*, refused, taking it ill, that they should offer such instructions to him, and asked if that was their way of calling

ministers; they answered very presumptuously, it was desired, and expected, and customarily used; and all did so that preached there. They forgot here the old charge, and made themselves guilty of it, which they have always held up against those whom they would have all to preach against; that they laid impositions on ministers: But in this, they turned imposers themselves, or else have falsely accused others on this head.

Some also, as soon as their meetings were scarce well settled, began to shew their teeth, and very magisterially enquired after the number and names of those that heard Mr. *Renwick*, that Intruder, that Jesuit, and encouraged to the delating them to the magistrate, a very unhappy and unhandfome way of discovering their zeal against Jesuits, to encourage and assist a crowned Jesuit in persecuting them whom Jesuits exclude from favour. Nay, so foolish as well as furious, was the fervor of some, both ministers and professors, that they were not ashamed to reproach him beyond all bounds, either of wit, honesty or modesty; affirming, That he was frequently at mass, and was seen at *Haggs*, *Fetter-wires*, and several other Papist's houses. A lie, at which, the father of lies, and the father of Papists rejoiced, in that, when he had prevailed so far, as to get them to connive at the mass, who should have been its greatest opposers; he had success also, to make them believe such a lie, that he, who cried, the land was polluted by offering one mass in it, was a frequenter of masses himself. But, by believing of lies, that idolatry hath had its rise and advance in the world.

ACCORDING to appointment, a General Meeting convened upon the first day of June, 1687.—After prayer, and modelling of the Meeting according to their usual custom.

The following conclusions and resolutions were agreed upon.

It was resolved that Mr. Lining's home coming should not be stopt, but that he should be left to his own liberty.

And it was concluded that a letter of information of affairs among us should be sent to M. William Boyd. This was not done till afterward.

It was also resolved that any letters which should be sent abroad, the double of them was to be brought to the
next

next meeting, that so these letters which they desired to be written in their name, that they had not time nor conveniency then to write, might be seen and heard by the whole meeting afterward.

It was also appointed, that one should go to Ireland to conduct Mr. David Houston's wife and family from thence to this land; and 5l. Sterling was allowed for their charges. This was accordingly done, and she came over not long after this time.

IN this interval matters continued as is before related.

IN this sad time, A General Meeting convened at Carntable, upon the 3d of August, 1687. After prayer and modelling of the meeting—

It was resolved to write a letter to Mr. Hamilton, in answer to one they received from him, wherein he gives an account of his travels to Helvetia and Switzerland, shewing what reception his message met with in Berne, Basile, Geneva, &c. and the state of religion in these places, &c. which shall be here inserted.

To the honourable Mr. Robert Hamilton.

July 6th, 1687.

Honourable and Dear Sir,

YOU may know from manifold experiences, that *through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.* The way to the heavenly Canaan lieth through a waste and howling wilderness. Our pilgrimage is through a valley of tears, and over mountains of difficulties: But as we have a good and comfortable guide, so he can bring meat out of the eater, and sweet out of the strong, and make the flinty rocks give water to us; yea, he can make our bitter waters sweet unto us, and in abundance of sorrow give super-abundance of joy. We doubt not but you have often found this, which helps and animates you in obedience to the will of God, to undergo so many perplexities and discouragements.

We received your letters. In that which shews your purpose of travelling through other churches, we observe the various and singular troubles which you did meet with at Leewarden; your conflicts in that place have been sharp and multiplied, and we reckon it our

part to be burden-bearers with you, though we be far short of this, as of all other duties. But we hope you have both peace and joy in your lot, considering the precious and honourable cause for which you are redacted unto it. And we are greatly refreshed with the report of the tenderneſs, zeal and ſtedfaſtneſs of theſe few worthy friends at Leewarden, who have been encouraging to you, and took a ſhare with you of all your afflictions. In the letter which gives a relation of your travels through ſome other churches, as we ſee your care to lay out unto them our priſtine reformation and preſent ſufferings; ſo alſo to ſhew us in what ſtate affairs are in amongſt them; whereby we judge ourſelves greatly obliged unto you, for that might be greatly to our advantage if we could improve it. Oh! we underſtand that hateful profaniry, deteſtable carnality, vile ſuperſtition, deplorable defection, lothſome lukewarmneſs and infatuated ſecurity are much abounding in theſe churches. The generality both at home and abroad, ſeem to have conſpired together to let go piety, and to cleave to policy. When policy is kept as piety's ſervant, it helps to ſecure it: But when it is advanced as maſter it does much to undo it. The rule of ſcripture-ſimplicity and carnal wiſdom are ſquared very unlike to one another.

O what can we expect but a deſolation upon many lands! Chriſt hath a great conqueſt to make in the earth, and there muſt be a ſtrange ſhaking and overturning of kingdoms, that his kingdom may get place, as Hag. ii. 6, 7. In ſuch a caſe we ſhould be careful to hold faſt that which we have, Rev. iii. 2.: We have a great word of teſtimony delivered unto us, which (we are hopeful) ſhall yet empty thrones and pulpits. O how worthy is it of all that we can witneſs for it! and how unworthy are we of it if we ſhall deſert it! In ſuch a caſe we ſhould ſtudy to be wholly and only for the Lord God of Hoſts. The profaniry, carnality and indifferency of the generality ſhould provoke us to holineſs, ſpirituality and zeal; but alas! in the miſt of all this we have our deep ſhare of the ſpiritual plagues that are abounding in this day: It is not with us as ſometimes it hath been. O Lord, pour out thy ſpirit upon us. In ſuch a caſe we ſhould be mourning for all the abominations committed in the earth, eſpecially in the churches. O happy ſhall they be who ſhall be found marked among

mong the mourners in Zion, for they shall be spared, Ezek. ix. 6.

O! where is zeal to God? Where is zeal for his concerns? Where is tenderness now to be found? when there is so little holy indignation, so little sorrow and mourning for the magnitude and multitude of the transgressions of this generation. In such a case, we should be laying our own things amongst our feet and preparing to meet our God who is *coming out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity*, Amos iv. 12. Isa. xxvi. 21.

The information which you give us of the sad overthrow, yea almost extirpation of the ancient and famous *Waldenses* in the valley of Piedmont, is very grieving and affrighting to us. O what may other churches expect when such things are done unto them! O that all churches would take warning at their sad and lamentable cost, of the sin and danger of compounding with or trusting enemies, whose offers are snares, and who know not to keep oath or promise either to God or man. We bless the Lord for any kindly acceptance you got in any place of your travels: We desire, that in our name you may thank these (whether in *Geneva* or *Switzerland*) who have received your information, or shewed you kindness. And when you write, signify unto them that we purpose (according to your desire) to keep up a correspondence with them, and to send them letters and informations; but apologize for the delay, considering our scattered condition and the weighty affairs at present among our hands which we cannot defer.

We have few particulars to inform you of at the time; the adversaries are restrained from that measure of outrage whereunto once they were given up; they change their methods, but they do not change their natures; the eyes of many are like to fail with waiting for a liberty and free toleration such as is given to England, and we hear that the enemies are divided about it. They may be divided about the means, but they are united in the end and design. Many ministers who formerly were lying bye from their work are now bestirring themselves more about it, and frequently preaching; but they do generally declare (or rather discover) themselves more fully than before, by loading us with false imputations, and by pressing people in their letters and sermons, not only not to concur with us in our present testimony, but to

flee from us. Yet the more that they are of this strain, they gain not the more ground. We may say, by the good hand of the Lord our number is rather increasing than decreasing. We are doing our endeavour to have elders elected and admitted amongst us.

Now, worthy and dear Sir, we hope we need not put you in mind to study all necessary freedom and tenderness toward them of foreign churches, and patiently to wait upon any of them so long as there may be hope; by your frequent conversing among them you will know better what may be for their advantage and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ than we can tell you.—The Lord be your leader and guide. The eyes of many are upon you: O study that every word and action may be so expressed and done as you may not be ashamed to avow it, if it were before the whole generation of mankind, whatever be their different humours, persuasions and inclinations; and also, as you may have peace in it before God. There lieth much advantage to the cause in our expressing ourselves in such a form of sound words as may pertinently signify the matter, faithfully declare our minds, and not favour of prejudice, pride or passion, or in their own nature tend to irritate these who do oppose themselves. We would seek the good of every soul; and though as to many we miss our end, yet we should carry so towards them, as may leave a conviction upon their consciences that it was their good we were seeking. Whatever others are in their way, we are the same by nature, and we should pity them and lament over them, and yet hate the garments spotted with the flesh, and carefully keep ourselves from partaking of their sins.—Now, we do heartily and jointly commend you to the all-sufficiency and faithfulness of your God, not ceasing to pray for you; and that any work you have been or may be instrumental to begin abroad, may be carried on by the good hand of the Lord, We are,

*Honourable and dear Sir, your sympathizing friends,
and obliged servants in the Lord.*

Subscribed in our name, and by our desire, by the clerk of our General Correspondence,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

It was likewise resolved that every member of our societies shall be desired to provide themselves of arms, and bring them alongst with them for their own and their brethren's defence, when they got the opportunity of hearing the gospel, and to our General Meetings.— This resolution was judged necessary, in regard that there was some slackness amongst severals at this time in this duty, that so they might be stirred up to more forwardness thereafter.

It was also resolved that a letter should be written to Mr. Boyd, shewing that in answer to his letter, dated *March 2d.* we had sent 3l. sterl. which we desired to know if he had received, and that his letter without date came not to us till *June 1st*, at which time, being met together, we had sent him other 3l sterl.—and shewing, that our hearing of his being licentiate had put us in some amazement, he not having acquainted us with his purpose, (though he had transmitted several letters to us) which was contrary to his undertaking when he went abroad. And as to the calling him home we left it to his choice as we did when he went abroad.

It was likewise resolved that a letter should be written to John Haddow who was then at Utrecht; which was done. One thing which moved the meeting to resolve upon this, was their desire to have differences betwixt Mr. Hamilton and him removed, but it was not successful as afterwards will appear.

It was also resolved that a full discharge should be given to Mrs. Jane Hamilton of 160 Guilders which she brought home, having got it from some abroad, to be given to the societies.

Moreover, it was resolved by the meeting, that James Wilson should be desired to go to Ireland and converse with such ministers as he shall be recommended unto. This was done.

And it was resolved that the 16th of *August* shall be observed by our societies, a day of fasting and prayer unto the Lord in the behalf and upon the account of the banished; and of humiliation and mourning for the iniquity of the present toleration; And also, to seek the Lord's counsel how to carry in the present circumstances.

THE toleration was granted and embraced, as is already said, with which the societies could not join, nor
countenance

countenance in the least; so they thought it their duty to frequent field-meetings, though interdicted under severe penalties, for which they were loaded with reproach by these that were at ease; they had also the rage of the persecuting enemies bent against them. This, though weighty in itself, nevertheless did not discourage them from setting about, and doing of that which they judged necessary and called for at their hands, according to their station, in their present circumstances.

A MEETING having convened at *Auchengilloch, Oct. 5th, 1687.*—After prayer and modelling of the meeting—it was resolved and concluded by them, That Mr. Lining should go abroad another season to an University, in order to the perfecting of his studies, and that he should be maintained by the societies.

Mr. Lining came to this land in July last, and was himself at this meeting; and being now to leave them again for a time, it was thought fit, for their satisfaction, to desire him to shew somewhat of his mind and resolution concerning the work he was intending to set about, and to signify his jointness with them in the cause and testimony the societies were contending for. Whereupon he wrote a paper and delivered it to them containing the same *. Presently after this he went abroad.

THE case of the land at this time cannot be expressed in few words; however a little hint in general may here be given. The subtle enemy gained much of their end in granting the toleration; for Papists were encouraged, and severals of them put in places of power and trust: idolatry was erected in sundry places and altars set up, heresy, blasphemy and error were tolerated, and profanity passed without punishment. Adversaries were seeming to smile upon some, yet raging against others. Many were at ease, lurking under the shadow of this pretended liberty, but such were troubled who could not comply therewith. The edge of zeal in not a few was blunted, and (alas!) there was great silence in many ministers as to the giving warning of the public sins and duties

* This paper appears to have been designedly suppressed, and is not now to be found. There is no further account of what was done at this meeting.

ties of the day. But Mr. Renwick and his brethren, as they durst not homologate the toleration, nor join with it in the least, but as they had opportunity, shewed the evils thereof, so they thought it their duty to preach in the open fields (which was strictly interdicted under most grievous penalties) where they set the trumpet to their mouth and gave faithful warning of the sins and snares, duties and dangers of the time. These meetings the societies frequented, at which their souls were watered and refreshed in hearing the gospel: For which, both these ministers, and people were much persecuted by enraged and cruel enemies, and sadly misrepresented and reproached by many of their brethren, instead of that sympathy which was called for at their hands.

In the interval, not long after the last meeting, as also before it: Mr. James Renwick (whose pains and labours, hazards and perils were great, in going about his Master's work) did ordain several elders, in diverse places of the country, who were nominated by the societies.

ACCORDING to the appointment of the last Meeting, a General Meeting convened at *Frierminion*, December 7th, 1687.—After prayer and modelling of the Meeting the following resolutions were condescended on.

It was concluded that the *Vindication* should be sold at eight-pence per book, and at seven-pence unstitched. The *Informatory Vindication* being printed, and several of them brought home, it was thought fit that a rate should be set on them, that the price might be alike to all who should buy of them.

It was also concluded by the Meeting, that until the next Meeting they should not be offended at any who should call, or hear Mr. William Boyd: And that such as had freedom to hear him, should not be offended at such as had it not*. This resolution may seem strange, yet it was thought fit at that time, in regard that upon the one hand, there being some exceptions amongst some, against Mr. Boyd (who not long before this meeting was
come

* Mr. James Renwick denied his consent to this conclusion, and also declined to preach with him, and was much perplexed about this affair, as he shews in his LIV and LV Letters, Page 195, ----- 198.

come home) especially as to the way of his license, which he obtained from the ministers at Groningen, he having taken an engagement at it, which was offensive to not a few, and the more because he would not show it. Nevertheless, being loath to break among themselves upon this head, and out of tenderness to Mr. Boyd, they judged this resolution might be helpful, hoping they might get more clearness in this particular afterward, and that the scruples of some might be removed.

It was likewise concluded that Ja. Ca. was to borrow in the name of the Meeting two hundred Marks, which was to be paid again by the Books that were to be brought home (*viz.* the Hind let Loose) or otherwise, if necessity called for it.

And it was resolved that a Letter should be written to Mr. Robert Hamilton then at Leewarden. Accordingly it was drawn up and sent; the tenor of it followeth.

Much honoured and worthy Sir,

GOD hath determined for you no small share of the sufferings and trials of this poor afflicted church: And we judge that in this point; we would be undutiful toward him, and ingrate toward you, if we remembered not the same, with some measure of sympathy. You have many proofs of the Lord's goodness and power to reflect upon, in his bringing you through the inundations of former troubles, that have raged and swelled upon you: Which experiences may minister help to your faith, in present boisterous and pressing tempests, for God is faithful and will never forsake them that seek him, nor let them be ashamed of their hope, that put their trust in him; wherefore resort unto your magazine, where there is store of Christian armour, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, taking care for nothing, but to keep a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man; which will yield no small peace, tranquillity and serenity of spirit, whereby you shall sit Noah-like, in the midst of the floods.

Being met together this day, we communed and consulted anent calling you home, and were all desirous that ye should come: But before we would proceed to any conclusion, we thought fit to write to you, desiring to

know

Know your own mind, and clearness anent it; and whether or not ye find any door yet open abroad, for your being further useful there, in behalf of this church; so we desire you will be pleased to let us have your answer before the end of February, and we shall agree upon that which we may judge most for your encouragement and the advantage of the cause, and let you know of it timely thereafter.

We thought fit likewise to acquaint you, that we are pinched with the sense of the want of such a number of ministers, as may make up an ordinary and competent judicatory (together with the elders) for exercising acts of potestative mission, and may preach the gospel more plentifully, whereof there is no small famine.

And in our meeting we have communed anent Mr. Douglass, as we have not slighted your objections, so we have not proceeded to call him, yet we cannot conclude that they are so relevant and sufficient, that we should enquire no more after him, especially, seeing we hear that he agreeth in a great measure with our testimony, and keeps himself abstract from contrary parties: And hath deputed himself exemplarily for temperance, and even for some years abstained from the use of that wherein it was reported that he was excessive before: And we resolve to carry so towards him, as he may not be discouraged, and none other offended. Moreover, what we may determine at the next meeting concerning him, we shall give you notice.

No more at the time, but desiring you would salute in our name all your friends, We are,

*Much honoured and worthy Sir,
Your real and sympathizing friends,*

Subscribed in our name, and at our desire,

By MICHAEL SHIELDS.

It was resolved by the Meeting that every Correspondence should appoint two, or three men of their number, to go through the Societies in the bounds, and gather up the account of the sufferings in that place; and that the same should be brought to the next Meeting.

Accordingly somewhat of this was done.—And it was appointed that the first Thursday of January, 1688. should be observed by our Societies as a day of fasting and prayer unto the Lord, that he would be graciously pleased to preserve our ministers, bless their labours, and add to their number, and also that he would bring down the throne of iniquity, and give us godly and faithful magistrates.

Lastly, It was resolved that the next Meeting should meet at *Blackgannoch*, upon the 7th day of March, 1688.

THE case of the land in general continued to be sad, enemies were advancing in their wicked designs; defections were growing, and hardness of heart, and impenitency increasing; security, lukewarmness and indifferency were much abounding, and the zeal of not a few blunted. And as the whole country, for the most part, enjoyed outward peace and quietness; nevertheless the societies were in trouble, and exercised under several damping discouragements; as they could not join with the toleration, or any other of the enemies pretended favours, so they thought it their duty and great privilege to call and hear these ministers who preached in the open fields; and for this the cruel enemies manifested their rage and malice against them, and the tongues of many (especially ministers) were much exercised to reproach them.

But the saddest stroke which in this interval they met with, was the apprehending and execution of Mr. *James Renwick*, a faithful minister of the gospel, whose painfulness and labours were signally countenanced of the Lord; and he was helped and honoured to seal these truths with his blood, which he had been preaching, owning, and contending for, in his life. It did not a little dash and confound enemies, and silence reproachers of him, when they saw, and heard of his Christian carriage, zeal, courage, confidence, and cheerfulness in his sufferings, and at his death. But albeit to die was his gain, yet the same was many poor peoples loss, being deprived of a faithful, and painful pastor, and a zealous and seeing watchman; and yet as his death was confirming to poor people in these truths he had been suffering for, and encouraging to them to continue in the same; so it might have been said, that by it, the enemies gain-
ed

ed nothing, nor was the truth a loser, the former having got a dash thereby, and the latter a witness.

IN this sad time, a General Meeting convened at *Blackgannoch*, upon the 7th of March, 1688.—After prayer, and modelling of the Meeting,

It was resolved that the laird of Kerland and James Wilson should be desired to go and converse with Mr. Darroch a minister in Kintyre.—Accordingly after the meeting was done,

It was also resolved that a Letter should be written to Robert Hamilton, who was then at Leewarden, and another to John Haddow at Utrecht, which were accordingly drawn up and sent.

One thing moving the Meeting to write at this time to both these gentlemen, was their desire to have differences removed that were betwixt them, that so they might be helpful to one another in that work of printing an account of our sufferings which was then designed to be set about. But as these differences was not removed thereby, so albeit there was pains taken in gathering accounts of the sufferings of many, and of enemies cruelty and barbarity, &c. yet it went not on, as to the writing of what was intended, not only in regard there were several things wanting, to make the account full and compleat; but especially the Revolution, which fell out this year, affording things which occasioned other work.

A copy of the Letter to Mr. Hamilton follows.

Much honoured Sir,

OUR kindness to, and sympathy with you in all your trials, (which hath not been few) upon truth's account, yet remain, though the significations thereof be but small, and not corresponding to what evidences you have given, both at home and abroad, of your concernedness with our broken and bleeding church, of your zeal for the propagation of its testimony, and of your sympathy with the witnesses and sufferers of Christ therein; and in particular with us your companions in tribulation for the word of his patience, though we be unworthy of that signature. But we hope what you have done, or are doing of this kind, is upon a more noble account than expectations of recompence from any

creature, or more especially from us, who are not in a capacity to do it equivalent to the extent of its merit.

So we desire you would put a more favourable construction upon our silence in not writing to you, then to think the same proceeds from forgetfulness of you; for as puzzling difficulties, and damping discouragements have been many and great, albeit little regarded by some, so at this time they are neither few nor small, from all hands and as little taken notice of by these at ease as what formerly we met with

However for your information and satisfaction, in order to have your sympathy and advice, and also to stir up others not to forget us in this our low condition, we find it necessary to give you a short account how matters are with us, which if our eye, or our ear could affect our hearts, might be full of lamentation and mourning, but yet as these who have hope; for we are bereaved by cruel and bloody hands of two faithful ministers, and valiant standard bearers: Alas! our stroke is heavy, and our wound deep and wide; and yet concerning this, we may sing of mercy as well as judgment, yea of mercy in judgment; seeing the Lord helped and honoured the one (Mr. James Renwick) willingly and cheerfully to lay down his life at the Grass-market in Edinburgh for the cause of Christ, which is a greater confirmation to the same, and to the owners thereof, and proves a greater dash to the backsliders who were waiting for his halting, and helps more to fill up the cup of enemies, now near the brim, than his life could have done: And the other is now Christ's prisoner at Dublin in Ireland, suffering cheerfully (as we hope) for his borne down truths.

Through the loss of which worthies, as truth wants living witnesses and valiant champions for it upon the earth, so we are deprived of our faithful guides and leaders, for our unfruitful and unthankful carriage under the free preaching of the gospel by them dispensed; a loss which we can never enough lament, and know not what way to get it supplied. All doors for a cleanly ordination of ministers at home seem to be shut, and if we find none abroad open, our case will be deplorable. Therefore it is our earnest desire, that you would lay out yourself to see if a cleanly and approved ordination for Messrs. Alexander Shields and Thomas Lining can be obtained, either by the ministers of Embden or in a-

ny other place, and write to us about the same with the first occasion ye can get. And albeit our sorrow and lamentation over the loss of our faithful ministers should be great, and our desire to have others in their stead pressing and urgent: Yet, as we would keep the ground the Lord hath helped us to take up, and look to our selves that we lose not these things that we have wrought; we desire only to countenance such whom he will own in their walking in his way, and keeping up and contending for the testimony of the day. The consideration whereof hath put us to much pains and many perplexing thoughts about Mr. William Boyd, the last whereof was this day, (being the day of our meeting) a short hint whereof we shall give you.

The meeting desired to know his mind concerning that at which they left in their last meeting, *viz.* If he was clear to preach for the not countenancing of the tolerated ministers, as was the practice of the rest of his brethren, especially he who sealed the cause lately with his blood?

Mr. Boyd answered, His mind about that was much about the same as formerly; yet after some janglings and debatings, he came a greater length than ever, in that he was for withdrawing from and discountenancing the accepters, addressers for, and improvers of this toleration: But as for such, though they came not up the full length of owning all the parts of our testimony, and did not join with us, nor preach in the fields, yet were against this toleration, free of defection and owned our covenants and work of reformation, he was not clear to give his judgment concerning hearing of them. It was told him, that of such we were not speaking, and if there were any such in Scotland or in any other place, we would be glad to know of them.

After this it was told him, that it was reported in some places of the country, That when he was licensed at Groningen he had given an engagement to the ministers there not to preach separation from these ministers in Scotland from whom we had withdrawn upon sufficient grounds.

This he denied, but confessed he gave in a paper to them of his principles and resolution.

However, there was a delay put to the joint calling of him until the next meeting, that we might get a proof of his practice being conform to the profession of his principle

principle concerning discountenancing of the tolerated ministers; and that we might endeavour to get a sight of the paper given in by him to the ministers by whom he was licensed; which he said he had not, but only a draught thereof, out of which the paper he gave in was taken, and that he knew not well where it was; and also that a day for prayer about him might be kept by the societies, which is to be the first Thursday of *May*.

In the mean time, it was concluded, (as at the last meeting) for avoiding of confusion and division, that those who had clearness to call and hear him, should not be offended at those who had none; and those who wanted the same, should not be offended at those who had it.

Thus you see how it stands with Mr. Boyd and us. We desire ye will endeavour, if ye can, to know what is the nature of that paper given in by him to the ministers of Groningen, or to get a double of it from them and send it to us; but you would do it in a cautious way, lest the ministers there be more stumbled at us when they discover our jealousies of him.

There is another thing we judge expedient to acquaint you with. It hath been our design and desire more than two years to collect an account of the sufferings of this despised remnant, with what the rest of the land have suffered under the domineering tyranny of the late deceased tyrant, and of the present Usurper, to the end it may be printed; but though our endeavours in this hitherto have not answered our design and the pressing call to the duty, yet it is expected the next meeting will put a period to it. This we think a part of our generation-work, and a duty laid upon us, as we would have the cause of Christ, which we own and suffer for, handed down and transmitted to posterity, and not be guilty of robbing them of such a rich treasure as the fragrant and refreshing account of the sufferings of the martyrs, confessors and witnesses of Christ in this age is, and will be to them who come after us.

When this account is collected and put in some order and dress by way of a martyrology, we intend to send to John Haddow in Utrecht. That which moves us to this resolution of employing him, is his fittedness for waiting upon the press; but more especially because of his offer to print the same, though it should extend to a large volume, upon his own expences; which we cannot well
refuse,

refuse, not knowing another way to get it done. So to the end that this so necessary a work may be the better effectuated, it is our serious and hearty desire that these differences betwixt you and him * (which to us are matter of sorrow and unpleasent to hear of) may be removed, and unity in the Lord obtained, at least so far as that you and he may concur in prosecuting this affair; and that you may send him these of the martyrs testimonies you have, and what account you have of what fell out before Bothwel, at it, and since; which we know your concernedness put you to seek after and get, which will prove a great help to the perfecting of that work, so profitable to the present and succeeding generations. We intend to commence it from the beginning of this tyranny, and insert all the testimonies in Naph-tali, with what account we can gather from thence and other collections relating to the times before Bothwel, which we intreat you to help us in; as also, we have thoughts of inserting all the dying speeches of those that suffered since, though differing from us, with animadversions upon their mistakes, that so it may be a complete system of all the sufferings in our day.

We shall desist, wishing the blessings of the everlasting covenant to be your mercy. Mind us when at the throne of grace. Salute all your friends in our name. Write to us. We are,

Your real friends in the Lord,

Subscribed in our name, and at our appointment,
by

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

The letter to John Haddow was of the same tenor with the former, except that after shewing the necessity and utility of a martyrology, it runs thus,—

“ And

† Of this John Haddow and the differences here spoken of, see Mr. Hamilton's long letter foregoing. There is extant a disdainful letter of John Haddow's to Mr. Hamilton upon this occasion, demanding by virtue of a commission from the meeting, the testimonies, &c. in his custody. As he had now by fair pretences ingratiated himself into esteem and credit since Mr. Renwick's death. He was afterward a captain in Lord Angus's regiment,

“ And when the same (*viz.* accounts and testimonies) are gathered and put in some dress and order, which we cannot do as is requisite under our many disadvantages, but must devolve the same upon your industry. Only because we intend to commence it from the beginning of this tyranny, we shall endeavour in the first place to dispatch what relates to the time before Bothwel, with the testimonies in Naphtali, whereof much must be referred to your knowledge; then we are to send the same to you, thereby to give you the trouble of polishing, printing and publishing the same.

“ Sir, This is a great charge we lay upon you, both troublesome and expensive; and would not have the confidence to impose it, were it not from necessity of the work, which we cannot otherwise get done, and emboldened by your chearful undertaking of, and instigating thereunto with encouraging promises of improving your interest among friends with you, to defray the expences thereof, which if lent, we hope will not be lost.—

“ And to the end so necessary a work may be the better effectuated, and to have all who own the testimony of the day of one mind in the Lord, working with one hand, and lifting with one shoulder. It is our earnest desire, that what differences (to us matter of sorrow) are betwixt you and our worthy friend Mr. Hamilton, may be christianly removed, and oneness in truth and duty obtained, at least so far as to concur in expediting of this work, for he may be serviceable to you therein. We have written to him about the same, we desire you may do the like in a friendly manner, &c.”

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

In *May* following Mr. Robert Hamilton returned an answer to the General Meeting's two last letters to him; the tenor whereof follows.

Worthy Friends,

AS the sufferings of Christ abound in you, so the God of comfort, even the consolation of Israel, make your consolation also to abound by Christ Jesus. Zion's loss, and the loss of the poor remnant cannot well be exprest; so I confess at present I am necessitated
not

not to mention it. It is like it will be as profitable for both you and me to hold it up before him that comforteth those that are cast down, as to attempt to hold it out to others.

In answer to yours of the date *Dec. 7th*, 1687. As to my home-coming, I finding both your indistinctness in it, and friends here their distinctness as to my staying, as also, the Lord seems both by his dispensations and otherwise to call me to sit still, though he knows how I am still with you.

As for Mr. Douglafs, when I consider his former miscarriages at home and abroad, his foul deserting of, and long lying by from the work of the Lord, his not coming out to help the Lord against the mighty, it gives me great impressions that he shall not be much your temptation, neither that the Lord has much further work, if any for him, in his vineyard.

As also, I think the Lord is calling you to walk circumspectly in that particular, his so signally parting you and him, requires no less distinctness and clearness in closing and joining with him again, which seems as yet to be hid from my eyes.

As to your second letter written *March 7th*, 1688. And first, as to Mr. Boyd, as both his personal qualifications as a Christian, or ministerial as an officer, are so little satisfying, and that both first and last discovered by his tract of carriage and management, that I durst not for my own part either have had a hand in licensing, nor now in the least, of calling or owning him: and amongst other things this I have marked, that whatever drawing there has been to hale him in, it has been but as the trailing of one backward, he still setting his back on the work and workers, as these *Ezek. viii. 16.*

As for his seeming yieldings and distinctions in the last meeting, they are but a trick to get footing amongst you, now when Great Renwick is out of the way, who he found would stand in the way of his designs, who neither could nor would while alive, engage or join with him*.

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* How just these sentiments concerning Mr. Boyd were, as also how true the report was that he had a recommendation or certificate from some of the lax ministers, in order to obtain a licence, may be left with the Reader who is acquainted with his after conduct.

But further, I fear it may be a too visible tempting of the Lord, to meddle with him before he be cleared, at least of his licensing; and why not call him to send over a letter to the ministers of Groningen to deliver to me or to any intrusted, an account thereof, with a double of his paper, which he says he gave unto them of his principles and resolution? I shall only add one word, Isa. xxviii. 16. *He that believeth shall not make haste.*

As for your serious and hearty desire, "that the differences betwixt John Haddow and me might be christianly removed, and an oneness in the Lord obtained." I acknowledge your suit hath no little weight with me; so that if my dissatisfaction was grounded upon any personal interest, I assure you there should be no stop in it: But as it is founded upon what he hath done and is doing, both against what he seems to profess, and is his duty to own, I cannot see for the present how an oneness in the Lord can be obtained; and for mine own part I must say it, I never found his practice favour of piety or uprightnes, neither his judgment of straightnes; and so for my own part, I cannot win to a consent that either the should be intrusted or employed in so material, weighty and concerning a business, and far less to a delivering to him any papers with me, that might contribute to the promoval of a design, which otherwise I look upon as a most noble and necessary design. For, besides that I have no ground to confide in him, but the contrary; so I look upon him as every way incapable for such a work, and not without ground to suspect that his charges must flow from a sectarian chest, and its stile, if not more, from a sectarian brain, Ferguson, or such like.

And therefore, as I desire to construe of this your motion as flowing rather from zeal and tenderness, than any biased design; so I hope you will construe no worse of me, and will take in good part my freedom with you in this and other particulars; for though I be charged by some of flattery towards you, and of passion and prejudice toward antagonists, yet the Lord is my witness, how I have walked betwixt both, not as pleasing men, but (so far as weakness and infirmity will allow) setting the glory of God before mine eyes, and in this way I have found, and am finding much peace, so that I dare not change my old way and method for an seeming advantage.

vantage. But I hope I shall have occasion to speak more of this particular when I meet with our dear friend Mr. Alexander.

As to your desire anent him and Mr. Thomas, as it is weighty in itself, (being one of the greatest matters to me in the world) so it is not a little weighty as to my management of it; for I find that to make a motion of it here, were to stop it; and therefore, as I doubt not but ye will seek it to hold it up amongst all of you before the throne continually, for light, counsel and assistance, according to Mat. ix. 38. so it is my earnest request that ye may endeavour secrecy therein, for if it come amongst antagonists, there is little hope of success.

As to some particulars which I humbly judge will be requisite as to the carrying it on, I have sent in a line to Mr. Alexander; and though I cannot be positive to say, either that I can do it, or where, yet I think it will be expedient that you immediately send over Mr. Alexander with a commission to Mr. Lining to set about the trial of it*. And for me, I shall not be wanting in it. I say again, secrecy both here and at home is absolutely necessary.

You see then what way the Lord is taking with you, training us in every step, to live by faith. Be not discouraged, *In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.* Let us but follow, and not run before him, and he will provide. That place Psalm lxxviii. 17,—24. at this time has been sweet to some. There has been a tempting of God in the hearts of many, and a lusting after ministers; they asked meat for their lust, Psal. lxxviii. 18. but it is to be feared that as he has given them in his anger, so he will take them away in his wrath; and such beacons are surely not set up to us for nought. It is true, when we see the Lord sending out; and sitting faithful labourers, we are to meet and embrace them, but till then we are to stand still, for the Lord will have his officers both of

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his

* Mr. Alexander Shields did not go, and Mr. Lining was detained before the letters which were sent by the next meeting arrived. How clear views Mr. Hamilton had of the things and persons spoken of in this letter, was evident to many afterwards, who at that time took but little notice of it, or were dissatisfied with it. And though Michael Shields doth not mention it and several other of Mr. Hamilton's letters, yet having the originals written with his own hand, it was thought good to insert them, for the Reader's satisfaction.

his own choosing and levying, and only to run on his commission, his errands and work. And as I think, this is the surest, and safest every way, for folk now a-days, are ill to ken, and it is not every one that the Lord will now employ.

I shall only add a word as to Mr. Lining, his piety, and tenderness, since ever I knew him, was never suspected by me, though I ever judged that a more public, constant, resolute, bold and valiant spirit was requisite in him, for the work of our day; but knowing that this was his own burden and exercise, and that you have had some times' experience of him since his parting from me, gives me the more freedom to act therein on your demands.

Now worthy friends, look to the Lord himself for your direction, upholding, encouragement, and upmaking, for come what will, it shall be well with the righteous, and all shall end in a public testimony of divine favour to these who wait upon the Lord. Though he should shake heaven and earth, yet he will be the hope of his people, and the strength of Israel.

I hope ye will not forget me; thus commending you to the word of his grace, I am,

Worthy friends, your undoubted and sympathising friend in the Lord,

ROBERT HAMILTON.

MAY 7th, 1688.

It was likewise resolved by the Meeting that a Letter should be written to Mr. Alexander Cameron (brother to Mr. Richard) then at Utrecht, and another to Mr. John Nisbet, then also there, which were both drawn up and sent representing our low and destitute condition, the great desire to have the gospel preached to us, and shewing that our interest in them induced us to desire to know what help we might expect from them.

The sum of the Letter to Mr. Cameron follows.

Reverend Sir, beloved in the Lord,

WE may say in our case, *is it nothing to all you that pass by? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto our sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted us in the day of his fierce anger, &c.* We are hunted, cruelly per-

persecuted, killed all the day long, and counted as sheep for the slaughter, yet without pity, and instead of sympathy which we might expect from all spectators, and demand of all concerned in the cause of Christ; we are filled with contempt and scorn and reproach, not only from the proud, but from friends at ease, and with the same contempt and contradiction, in the same words and arguments, and from the same grounds from the bulk and body of professed friends, that we meet with from all the Atheists, Papists and malignants in the generation. And it were the more supportable, if this opposition were only levelled at us;—but it is our cause and testimony that is the mark that all their arrows from all airts shoot at, which we are persuaded cannot but wound and wrong the declarative glory of Jehovah, and his Christ: For we know of nothing that we contend and suffer for, that is not founded upon, and consonant to the law and the testimony, the written word of God, and the constantly confessed, and recorded principles of the reformed and covenanted church of Scotland, in its doctrine, worship, discipline and government, against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, tyranny, and all union, and communion with, and toleration given, or taken to, or from the men of these abjured courses. And we separate from nothing, and from none upon the account of any thing that is not condemned, and commanded to be withdrawn from, by the acts and constitutions of this covenanted church in her best and purest times.

Among all the calumnies cast upon us there is none more grievous than that odious one, that we have cast off all the ministers of the church of Scotland, which is more weighty now, when by this late lamentable stroke of holy providence, we are deprived of all our actual ordained ministers, that ventured upon all hazards, to declare to us faithfully the whole counsel of God, and concurred with us in our testimony. Of this charge we think, not only what is said in our Informatory Vindication doth sufficiently exoner us, but also our practice in seeking out, calling and hearing all ministers, qualified as the word of God, and constitutions of the church of Scotland require them to be, cloathed with Christ's orderly commission, free of scandals, ministerial and personal, free of errors, defections and compliances, and discharging their commission faithfully. This in some
measure

measure we have essayed, speaking to some, writing to others, and we resolve there shall be none in the nation, or out of it, belonging to it, adhering to, and asserting Presbyterian covenanted principles, so qualified as we have declared, and as all will grant ministers ought to be, and willing to preach the everlasting gospel among us, but we shall search for him, treat with him, invite and call him to declare to us all the counsel of God. And we hope this shall not be altogether fruitless with those that are not implicitly prejudiced against us, and are not altogether unwilling to venture upon the difficulties of our lot: We confess there are many discouragements to deter from concurring with us—any whom the simple sense of duty, sympathy with our case, and zeal for the cause will not drive out to us. But we hope the Lord will hear our cries for faithful ministers, and when the poor and needy seek water, and their tongue faileth for thirst, he will not forsake nor disappoint the expectation of a destitute people.

We cannot indeed, in our present circumstances, join with, or partake of ordinances from any minister that either hath addressed for, or accepted of, or doth improve this toleration, in obedience to, or observance of the court modifications, preaching under the sence of it, without a witness against it, even though he be not fixed in a particular place: But we refuse not to call and hear any ministers that are free of all these degrees of accession to it. And can clear himself of, and relinquish that and all other defections, and compliances in our day, albeit he hath not yet, or is not able to preach in the fields.

In this manner of simplicity and ingenuity, we use not to hide, cover or cloak, but freely discover our principles and practice to all, expecting some at least, will be so free and faithful as either to approve or shew the grounds of their disapproving and condemning our way; but we have this ingredient in our sorrows, as bitter as any, that though all cry out against us, and condemn us, as following an erroneous course; yet none will take the pains, by word or write, to admonish or instruct us, how or wherein we err. Yea though we have sent to many ministers, both the Vindication, and the Testimony against the toleration, (which you may see from John Haddow) some would not look upon the Vindication, and none will shew us their mind of either.

Sir,

Sir, we expect more of you, in whom we claim more than a common interest and plead a nearer relation and respect, both on account of your faithful and famous brother, a renowned minister and martyr of Jesus Christ, who owned and sealed with his blood these truths we contend and suffer for; and who had great hopes of you that the Lord would engage and spirit you to own the same: and upon your own account, for the favourable report we have, of the Lord's grace conferred upon you, fitting you for his service in the work of the gospel: and for that we know you were once with us, and we hope that when you shall make a nearer enquiry into our way, you shall not be far from us now.

However our love to you, and confidence in your candour doth oblige and embolden us to take the freedom to let you know how you have displeased and discouraged us joining with that Association party, in a conjunction with some, who were your brother's murderers (at least had a great accession to it) and betrayers of the cause; and that you have so long stood at such a distance from us,—withdrawing your countenance and correspondence in our darkness and distress.

We pray you, take more cognizance of our case, and inspection into our cause; and signify your mind unto us, wherein you see us right or wrong; and do us the favour to let us know what we may expect of your concurrence, which we earnestly desire, pray for, long for, and are ambitious of.

In expectation of your answer, commending you to the care, keeping, and conduct of the great Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, We rest, &c.

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

To this Letter Mr. Cameron returned answer in a Letter directed to Michael Shields, wherein he shewed sympathy, and ingenuity in telling that the Societies and he had not the same light in several things in their Testimony against the toleration, and therefore he saw not how he could be serviceable to them; and delayed to give any answer with respect to his joining with Argyle and his Association, until he came home, which would be about the beginning of winter.

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The Letter to Mr. Nisbet was near the same in substance with the above, to which, so far as I remember, he returned no answer.

It was further resolved by the Meeting that the last Thursday of March should be observed by all our Societies, for prayer, humiliation and fasting, upon account of the great stroke we met with, in being deprived of two faithful ministers of the gospel, and also, for our security and stupidity under all our strokes.

It was in like manner resolved that the first Thursday of May, should be kept, and spent by our Societies in earnest cries unto the Lord, in behalf of Mr. Boyd, that he may be sent forth to the work of the ministry, and spirited for the work of the day, and may be faithful and valiant in prosecuting the Testimony, as it was left by the witnesses of Christ now removed.

And it was appointed that the next General Meeting should meet at *Lothers* upon the first Thursday of June.

Sometime after this Meeting Mr. Shields with others being met together after deliberation, it was thought fit that the Societies should be desired to observe a day for prayer in behalf of Mr. Thomas Lining; the time being appointed and the causes drawn up, the Societies were acquainted therewith, as followeth.

The last Thursday of May was agreed upon to be kept by our Societies, a day of prayer to the Lord, that he would be graciously pleased to fit and furnish, and spirit Thomas Lining for the great work of the ministry: And that a door might be opened for a lawful, cleanly, and approved ordination, and that he might come home to us with the Lord's blessing, and be a faithful and fruitful labourer in the Lord's vineyard.

ACCORDING as it was appointed by the last Meeting, our General Meeting convened at the *Lothers* upon the 7th day of June.—After prayer, and modelling of the Meeting,

It was resolved by them that all our Societies lay out themselves in their respective bounds, to collect money, according to their ability for helping to relieve some of our brethren under bondage and slavery in Barbados. And that they should send what they got collected, to Edinburgh—Accordingly after this Meeting some money for the foresaid ends; and the persons in bondage
(who

(who were last banished) were relieved thereby, as shall be shown afterward.

This day there was little other thing done, in regard of news which came to it that Mr. David Houston (who was taken in January before, had been kept long in close prison, and badly used) was brought prisoner out of Ireland, and to be carried prisoner to Edinburgh, where it was feared they would take away his life.

This being known, excited the Meeting to think upon a way to relieve him from these bloody murderers.— Whereupon some stayed together several days, and others went to acquaint their friends about it, that they might be in readiness to assist in the rescue. But he did not come at the time he was expected; Nevertheless some few days thereafter, he was relieved at *Carbelpath*, where some soldiers were killed.

This action of rescuing Mr. David, was diversely talked of, some condemning it, others approving the same. But albeit Mr. David after this, was discovered, not only to be short in his naturals; but also some began to be jealous that there was too much ground for some of these things he was charged with*. And likewise that since, the Societies have discountenanced him; yet considering under what notion they looked upon him then, not only as a faithful minister, but a zealous sufferer for the testimony of Christ, and as one drawn unto death, and persecuted innocently by adversaries, as they thought themselves obliged in point of duty to endeavour his rescue, so they cannot be justly blamed for the same.

Upon the 9th day of June, many of these sent to this General Meeting (who had not gone home, but were waiting for the coming of Mr. David, as is said) and some others did meet together near *Coge's-head*, where by them after deliberation, some things were concluded on.

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* Some old accounts shew that by bad usage in prison, and the hurt he received when he was relieved, his feet being bound under the horses belly, in the scuffle he fell, and his head trailed sometime on the ground, before he could be relieved, by reason of which, he lost his teeth, and consequently distinctness of speech: But chiefly as he shewed publicly his dissatisfaction with the measures that after shortly were fallen upon, *viz.* supplicating the Convention of Estates, raising of Angus's regiment, conjunction with the ministers, &c. these caused his brethren to slight him, and many of the people followed their example, which much discouraged the good old man, he went to Ireland and lived a few years, and died there.

It was resolved that a Letter Testimonial, and Recommendation should be written, subscribed, and sent to Thomas Lining then at ——— (in the Netherlands) in order to his obtaining of ordination.—Accordingly it was drawn up. But (so far as I remember) he was ordained before it came to his hand.—A Copy of which follows.

To our much respected, and dearly beloved Brother, MR. THOMAS LINING.

THE Unanimous Call, and earnest invitation of some Select Societies in the Southern Shires of Scotland, suffering for the ancient Testimony; united in the approved Confession, and adhering to the Covenanted Reformation of this reformed church, for his obtaining and exercising the office of preaching the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ among us; with an humble Address, and earnest supplication to all the godly and faithful ministers of Christ, to whom he may apply himself for that effect, that they may confer upon him, and confirm him in the full power of the ministerial office.

WE Undersubscribers in the name, at the desire, and with the consent of all the suffering Societies in the Southern shires of Scotland, met together at our General Correspondence at the *Coges-head*, 9th of March, 1688.—Considering, and with regret reflecting upon our deplorable, and almost desolate and desperate-like case, still more decaying and declining to the worse (under the indignation of our holy God, punishing us for our own, and our fathers backslidings, falling from first love, breach of covenant, unfaithfulness under many wonders of mercies and gospel privileges) how now after all our sad sufferings and persecutions unto bonds, banishments and blood, and many weary wanderings in extremity of hazard and hardship, we have sustained from a popish, prelatial, and malignant faction, for professing and confessing an adherence unto the covenanted Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of this reformed church, by them overturned: Yea, and now when all others are at ease under the shadow and protection of the present toleration, offered unto, and accepted by men of all persuasions, on terms destructive

structive to, everfive of, and inconsistent with the constant Testimony of the church of Scotland, and the liberties, laws, constitutions, and covenants both of the church and nation (which because we are excluded from, and dare not partake of) we are not only killed all the day long, and counted as sheep for the slaughter, but, (instead of sympathy that sufferers might expect in such a case) exceedingly filled with contempt, with the scorn of them that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud. And which is more insupportable than all burdens, we are in great measure reduced to a famine of the faithfully preached gospel, being by men's violence of late deprived of two faithful ministers, the one a now glorified martyr, the other a confessor yet in bonds, whereby the ignorant among us are in hazard of perishing for lack of knowledge, the unstable in danger of seduction, through abounding errors crept in at the gate of this toleration, the doubtful in danger of desperate halting, the mourners in danger of discouragement, and the poor and needy of starving in hunger after the bread of life, which, they have none to break unto them: And the testimony for the prerogatives of our head, and king, and privileges of his kingdom against all encroachment made thereon, hitherto propagated, like to be buried in oblivion, while there is no standard bearer valiant for the truth upon the earth.

Upon these accounts, in this pressing necessity of danger and distress, seeing through the injury of the times, persecutions and iniquity of its defections, we can have no access to provide ourselves at home with ministers, except we shall say a sinful confederacy with them that say a confederacy, and come under insnaring obligations to abandon our covenants, cause, and testimony of Jesus Christ, in a surcease from all opposition to the open attempts of Antichristian enemies to introduce Popery in our land.

We can no longer forbear unanimously to call, and fervently to invite you, our much respected, and dearly beloved brother Mr. Thomas Lining,—much longed for in the Lord, to endeavour to obtain a Potestative Mission unto the ministry, from such faithful ministers of the gospel (holding the Head Christ and the foundation sure, and maintaining the universal testimony of Christians, and the general testimony of Protestants, against the greater and lesser Antichrist, not contradic-

ting ours; nor declining from their own reformation by defection or schism, but wrestling against corruptions not yet reformed) as after trial of your sufficiency, shall in Christ's appointed way confer the same upon you; and come over to exercise the office of preaching the everlasting gospel of Christ, to declare the whole counsel of God, and assert, and maintain the testimony of Jesus among us: which we have the more confidence to urge and obtest, because you being sequestrate into the study of that holy calling, at our desire and by our consent and suffrage; as we have heretofore sent you our Letter Testimonial, which here we confirm; attesting after long acquaintance the satisfying evidences you have given to us of your blameless, Christian and exemplary conversation, fervor and faithfulness in religion, soundness and seriousness in the principles, profession, and practice thereof; strengthening the hopes we have conceived of your qualifications wherewith the Lord hath fitted you for the work of the ministry; so having such a peculiar interest and concern in you, and upon many grounds satisfying to us, such an esteem of you as determines us to choose and call you for our minister when the Lord shall clothe you with his orderly commission.

We have therefore solemnly set time apart, with fasting and humiliation, to pray that our heavenly Father, the Father of mercies, and our Head, the King of the church, the Lord of the harvest, now when the harvest is great, and the labourers few, may fit, furnish, spirit and send you forth among us to labour in his harvest. And in the believing expectation of an answer of peace in this matter, we take the confidence to recommend you to the reverend Presbytery of ———, humbly beseeching, earnestly requesting and obtesting them in the bowels of Christ, that in sympathy with our distressed case; the fellow members of the same body in pity to them that are hungering after the gospel, in their love to their master Jesus Christ, and zeal for the propagation of his kingdom, and continuation of his testimony, now like to fall here, where sometimes it was displayed with power and glory, they may by the power they have received from Christ, after trial, ordain you a minister of the gospel, and commit unto you, and confirm you in the full power of dispensing all the ordinances of Jesus Christ.

In witness of which, our unanimous call and earnest request, we have appended our subscriptions, so many as we thought sufficient to gather. - - - - -

It was also resolved by the meeting, that Colin Allison should go to Kintyre to desire and invite Mr. Daroch to come to us, in order to have a conference with him, and to bear his expences by the way.

Accordingly Colin and James Inglis went the length of Greenock, but hearing he was gone to Ireland, they returned.

And it was resolved, that the last Thursday of *June* should be observed by our societies a day of fasting and prayer unto the Lord for Mr. David Houstoun; and in general, for the lamentable loss we sustained by being deprived of his ministry; and in particular that our petitions be accomodated to the emergents of providence with respect to his being relieved.

It was also resolved that the last Thursday of *July* should be observed by our societies a day of fasting, mourning and humiliation for the sad want of the exercise, and the right exercise of zeal and public spirit for God, appearing not only,

1st, In our deadness under gospel-ordinances, and indifferency under the want of them, little hunger after them, little profiting by them, and little sense of both. But,

2dly, In our great inclination to backsliding from, and not putting a due estimation on the matter of our testimony, not being concerned to contend with earnestness for it, and the carnal passionate way of others in debating with those we differ from.

3dly, Our remissness and slackness in keeping societies, frivolous excuses to shift them; our indifferent way of performing duties in them, many disorders in them, and little zeal and tenderness to remove them.

4thly, The abounding of offences among us, particularly the rushing of many into offensive courses to procure marriage.

5thly, Together with the just punishment of our many offences, the manifold reproaches cast upon the way and cause of God, that ought to be as a sword in our bones, and that they are cast upon us not only from enemies, but from many ministers and professors; and that we have greater sense of reproach on ourselves than on the cause;

cause; as also, that many are weakened and discouraged in duty, or scarred from it by reproach.

6thly, Chiefly our want of zeal against Popery; little indignation against, or fear of the manifest appearances of the approach and establishment of it in this land, and the little serious wrestling for the ruin and fall of Babylon, and that the Lord would divide and overturn the builders and supporters thereof, which is a necessary duty recommended to be minded at all times, especially on this day of fasting.

7thly, And in a special manner, the little extent of our zeal, little minding the dark places of the land, little concernedness with the case of England or Ireland, though they be in the same covenant with ourselves; little sympathy with the sufferings of other churches, as France, Hungary, and Piedmont; for which cause we are justly punished with the want of sympathy from all.

It was in like manner resolved that the last Thursday of August should be observed by all our societies a day of fasting and mourning for our sad short-coming in answering our profession under the cross, appearing by many lamentable evidences.

1st, The ignorance of many in societies, even in the fundamental principles of religion, with the little pains they take to inform themselves, and the little grief that others shew in the sense of it, while they rather insult over it than mourn for it.

2dly, Our idleness and trifling away our time, our infrequency in secret duties, and little edifying discourse with others.

3dly, Many discoveries of lightness, looseness, gaudiness and other miscarriages unbeseeming the gospel and the cause of Christ.

4thly, Much worldly mindedness, covetousness, and carking carefulness about worldly things.

5thly, Our little fasting in secret, or privately in families, our superficial and hypocritical way of performing duties, and mocking of God in our humiliations.

6thly, Our hardness of heart under all these dispensations we have met with, both of judgment and mercy; little sense of the wrath of God against the land, and particularly against ourselves, and little enquiring into the causes of it, or the acknowledgment of the effects of it,

And it was appointed that the next General Meeting should meet at —, upon the first Wednesday of *September*.

IN the interval betwixt the last meeting and this; as it was given out, the Duke of York's Queen was with child; so it was said she was delivered of a son *June 10.* who was made prince of Wales; (for which there was a day of rejoicing kept at Edinburgh, and at night with fire-works). But there were several pregnant demonstrations that this was a mere imposture and cheat put upon the nation. And albeit the Papists did look upon the having a prince, bred and brought up in their religion to succeed to the three crowns as a most feasible way to settle themselves in their vain hopes of bringing this notion under the yoke of Popery and slavery, yet herein they were mercifully disappointed, and the wicked ensnared in the work of their own hands.

As is hinted above, Mr. Houstoun being rescued, and some soldiers killed in that action; the same made great noise, and the cruel enemy was not a little vexed thereat; who, to demonstrate their rage against poor people for doing their duty, emitted a declaration ordaining courts to be kept immediately in the western shires, in order to find out the actors and abettors of those who had been at the rescue; which courts were accordingly kept in these shires, yet few or none who were active in that business were discovered, though in some places of the country the persons who sat in these courts were very severe and strict in their inquisition.

About this time there was a great search in Edinburgh, the occasion of which was variously talked of, but the consequences thereof were lamentable: many being involved in sin and dreadful perjury. One question commonly enquired at people, was, If they owned the covenants? which was done not only by Claverhouse and Col. Douglass, who were the principal inquisitors to whom these who were taken, were brought; but also by many single soldiers in their searchings up and down the town.

THIS Meeting (according to the appointment of the last) was to have been upon the first Wednesday of *September*; but it was thought fit to anticipate the same, by reason of some letters that had lately come from the Netherlands,

therlands, shewing that Mr. Lining was to be ordained. But for the better answering the same, there behoved to be a General Meeting to send some letters, particularly one to the ministers of Embden, and another to Robert Hamilton, for which cause advertisements were sent to the societies to send their Commissioners for a General Meeting at *Camp's-head-heights*, upon the first day of *August*.

ACCORDING to which appointment, A General Meeting did meet, day and place foresaid. After prayer, &c.

It was resolved that these who had not collected money and sent it in to Edinburgh according to the appointment of the last meeting, for helping to relieve some of our brethren in bondage in Barbadoes, should be desired to lay out themselves in collecting what money (in regard that which was already got would not do it) they could get, and send the same into Edinburgh, against the 22d or 24th of this month of *August*; and Dr. Furd and Michael Shields were desired to receive the money and deliver it unto, and make the transaction with the person who was to undertake for their relief.

Accordingly this was done; and the money was delivered to the foresaid person, who gave security either to redeem the persons, or to give back the money again; in performance whereof he sent a bill for it, to his correspondent in London, and he sent another to a gentleman in Barbadoes, who helped to transact for the relief of the said persons; most part of whom came home not long after. John Ruffel and John Stewart (two of the banished who had been relieved by the rest and sent home to give an account of their condition unto friends, in order to relieve them) were active to get money collected and sent away: Likewise they wrote a letter to James Baxter and another friend, to be communicated to the rest; the substance of which follows.

Dear Friends,

YOUR friends have done their endeavour to get you redeemed,—and for that end have given in here 4300 Merks Scots, which in Barbadoes is to be answered by a man of credit,—according as every one can be agreed for with his Master. So ye are desired to
do

do your utmost both for your own and the relief of your comrades,—and it is thought fit that you keep it as close from your masters as you can, until you make the bargain with them, lest they getting notice that money is come for your relief, do heighten your price, and so the sum be not sufficient, though it is all that can be got, and some have stretched themselves very far. We hope the person who is to give the money, will give you his advice and assistance.—

The persons to be relieved are you two, James Douglas, Thomas Brown, John Buchanan, Alexr. Bailie, Geo. Paton, Geo. White, Gilbert McCully, Robert Mitchel, John Wight, John White, George White and Agnes's Kier. As for John Aitken and William Hannay, their relations have taken another way for their relief.

If there be more of the money than purchases your relief, apply it to the supply of your necessity in your home-coming. But you are desired to keep account of the way how you dispose of it. — — — — —

It was also resolved by the meeting, that a supplicatory Letter should be written and subscribed by some elders, and sent to the venerable Classis of the ministers of Christ in Embden, representing to them our lamentable case, and imploring their help.

This Letter was accordingly drawn up, and subscribed by several elders, and sent to the said Classis; but it came too late as to Mr. Lining's ordination, he being ordained before; to get which done Mr. Hamilton was chiefly assisting. A copy of the letter follows.

To the Venerable Classis of the Reverend, Learned and Godly Ministers of Christ in Embden: Some societies of professors and confessors of Christ, wounded with persecutions, broken with divisions, and loaded with reproaches, suffering for the Presbyterian and covenanted reformation of the Church of Scotland; Do wish Grace, Mercy and Peace.

Very Reverend, very Learned and Godly Fathers, beloved and honoured in our Lord Jesus Christ,

AS it is the greatest rejoicing of all the lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ in such a doleful day to hear of

any church's enjoying pure ordinances, in unity, verity, peace, purity, plenty and power, standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, wrestling against corruptions and defections; aspiring to a growing reformation, contending for the faith delivered to the saints, and maintaining the testimony of Jesus against all obloquies and oppositions of adversaries: So in this cloudy and dark day the light and lustre of the church of Embden, meriting such a character, (like a city set on a hill which cannot be hid) hath not only affected the eyes of other reformed and suffering churches, congratulating your happiness, and adoring the mercy of the divine majesty on your behalf; but the favourable report thereof reaching us also, hath filled our hearts with much joy, even when mourning under all the grievances of persecution, defection, division and confusion, that ever any part of Christ's mystical body was made to groan under.

We have heard how early that reverend church of yours embraced the reformation, what famous and faithful champions the Lord hath stirred up from time to time to advance and assert it; to what a degree of beauty and holiness, truth, order and union did it arrive, maugre all difficulties; How much the Belgic and other reformed churches were obliged to it for communication of light, and establishment in doctrine and discipline; what a sanctuary it sometimes was to many of Christ's exiles, persecuted for religion out of the United Provinces, France and our own Britain. But all this is not so comforting and confirming to us under our present calamities, (seeing we know by lamentable experience at home, how eminent a church may be in all these prerogatives, as Scotland sometime was, and yet by falling from first love,—forgetting first works, may afterward forfeit all that glory) as that we are informed that you are solicitous not to lose that deserved renown, and ambitious to imitate—your predecessors zeal for the cause of Christ and propagation of his kingdom, and love to his people, whereof you give an ample demonstration in your exemplary sympathy with all afflicted churches; a grace which this day, to us at least, seems to be very rare.

Which considerations, together with the pressure of our necessity, which gives boldness to the most bashful, and courage to the greatest cowards, do embolden and encourage.

Encourage us (though unknown and very obscure in our outward case, yet as poor afflicted members of the same body, for edifying of which ye are placed in the ministry, and as suffering subjects and confessors of the same King and Head, whose glory and interest you are by office tenderly to regard) to supplicate for a share not only of that sympathy which ye shew to others, but of that succour which may suit the straits of suffering people, hungering after gospel-ordinances; that cannot obtain the comfortable benefit of ordained ministers of Christ from whom they may receive them: Which request we are hopeful your zeal for your Master's glory, desire for the enlargement of his kingdom, love to all the members of his body, and pity to the persecuted for his sake, will not suffer you to refuse, after you understand the case of those who send so far for your help.

We doubt not (right reverend) but your learning and concern in all the churches, hath furnished you with information of the great things God hath wrought for the sometime famous, faithful and fruitful church of Scotland. How from the very first emerging of the reformation from the depths of Popery, nothing was then left unreformed that ever flowed from the man of sin. Here, not only the reformation in doctrine, worship, discipline and government was calculated and advanced according to the pattern of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and advanced to that height and pitch of purity, unity and order, that other churches were emulous of such attainments; but also confirmed and ratified by national and solemn Covenants, several times renewed by all ranks, from the King to the poorest boor; wherein we came under solemn and sacred obligations and vows to the Most High, to preserve and persevere in that uniformity of doctrine, worship, discipline and government, and to extirpate, and never re-admit any corruption or novation contrary thereunto: Particularly Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, schism or defection, or any thing contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness; And how then the Lord was with us in his ordinances and providences, while we were with him:

But ah! now, how far are we from that? Whence, How, and whether have we fallen? How now, *doth the city sit solitary that was full of people? How is she become as a widow, that was great among the nations, and prin-*

cess among the provinces, how is she become tributary? How now, doth the enemies roar, in the midst of the congregations? they set up their ensigns for signs, they have broken down the carved work at once, they have laid our Jerusalem on heaps, the dead bodies of the Lord's servants, have they given to the fowls of the heaven; their blood have they shed like water round about; we are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us; and now they say let us cut them off from being a nation. We doubt not likewise but this fatal catastrophe, making such a noise in the world, hath come to your ears: How, by whom, and by what means, and it cannot but be notour, even to strange nations, for what causes Scotland hath been redacted to this desolation, and dissolution, at which all nations may stand astonished and enquire, wherefore hath the Lord done this? what meaneth the heat of this anger? They need not a monitor to answer, because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God.

A popish, prelatical, and malignant faction, formerly under restraint, and forced at least to feign subjection, taking advantage of the nations weariness of the Sectarians Anarchy, and of the Cromwellian Usurpation, and thereby through pretensions of peace, and corrupting flatteries, mounting themselves upon the supreme orb of the government, did undermine both the state and the ecclesiastic goverment, and then breaking all bonds, did in open and audacious defiance both of God and man overturn all those righteous establishments, and upon the ruins thereof, did introduce and erect an absolute tyranny in the state, and re-introduced the old Antichristian yoke of abjured Diocesan Erastian Prelacy, (which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear) and a blasphemous sacrilegious supremacy, divesting the only head of the church of his prerogative royal, and his spouse of the privileges wherewith he had endoted her: And by these means having involved the nation in the most heaven daring rebellion against the Most High, and attended with the grossest aggravations that readily have been recorded in any church where gospel light hath shined so bright: They have now by the late opened gate of this universal toleration (an unheard of device in Scotland) offering a kind of liberty to all forms and ways of religion except the old Covenanted Reformation, and attempt-

tempted to re-establish Popery, with all its retinue of idolatries, superstitions, errors and abominations.

Against all these insolent encroachments, there hath not wanted, through grace, a succession of faithful ministers and elders, and people, who have kept up, and continued a testimony, and sealed it with their dearest blood, and all sorts of severest sufferings, until by means of ensnaring Erastian indulgences granted by them, and received in recognizance of their despotick supremacy, giving a licence to such ministers as were nominated, elected, and judged qualified by the secret counsel of the kingdom, to exercise their ministry in such places as they confined them to, imposing restrictions, and instructions to regulate, direct, and bound both matter, and manner of the exercise of their functions: And all this without advice or consent of the church.

Our ministers were first divided; and then after the fatal discomfiture of a party of our brethren, appearing in defensive arms, for religion and liberty, lives, laws, and privileges, about nine years ago, were further, almost universally, drawn by craft, or driven by cruelty into manifest, and manifold defections, from the cause and covenant of God, preferring peace to truth, and ease to duty, consulting their own interest, rather than the interest of Christ, abandoning the necessary testimony of that day, in that clamant case of confession, leaving the people without a warning or witness, in the midst of many errors, snares, and temptations, and refused many reiterated calls to come and declare to them the whole counsel of God.

Since which time we have been as sheep in the midst of wolves, a prey to all devourers, killed all day long, and counted as sheep for the slaughter, proscribed, forefaulted, miserably oppressed, inter-communed, interdicted of all harbour or supply, comfort, or communion with any, chased, murdered, imprisoned, tortured, execute to the death, or banished and sold as slaves, in so arbitrary, illegal, and inhumane a way, that in some respects ours may be compared to any persecution, primitive or modern. And, which hath been to us an affliction more insupportable than all these miseries, we have been groaning under a famine of the faithfully preached gospel, and what through mercy we have obtained of it, was got in the peril of our lives, because of the sword of the wilderness, where in the open fields, exposed to all weathers,

we could not be without fears of bloody assaults of murdering enemies, incessantly hunting to prey upon us, and mingle our blood with our sacrifices.

All which time we have had but four ordained ministers labouring among us, three of which have been successively crowned with the garland of martyrdom: one of late this same year, and the fourth, hath been long a confessor in bonds, for the same cause of the Covenanted Reformation, which hath redacted us to more difficult, deplorable and desperate-like circumstances than ever. For we are both expressly excluded from the pretended benefit of this toleration, by provision of laws, acts and edicts, left in full force against us; and also finding ourselves obliged by the word of God, and our covenants, in our capacities to witness against the indignities done to our God, injuries done to the church, and invasions made upon our religion and liberties by this popish toleration. We are exposed to the rage of enemies, and obloquies of all, for our witnessing against this toleration, flowing from a fountain of absolute power, which all are to obey without reserve, and which all recognize and homologate, that accept of it; conveyed through such a channel as suspends, stops, and repeals our righteous laws made against papists, and in favours of our Reformation, projecting for its declared ends, the undermining of our religion, and introducing and establishing popery and slavery; for its visible and palpable effects, the increase of error, the encouragement of wickedness, the advancement of defection, the augmentation of divisions, and the abounding of all abominations; reaching in its extent, to the bringing in all these errors, and corruptions which we are obliged and sworn to extirpate, and allowing protection to all idolatry, blasphemy and heresy, and to every thing except the good old way of truth faithfully and freely declared: And offered unto, and accepted by our declining brethren on terms ever since of, inconsistent with, and destructive unto the known confession, constantly asserted principles and testimonies of this church; encroaching upon all the powers, our Lord hath conferred upon his church, both the dogmatick power modelling the doctrine, and the diatactick power disposing the order, and the critick censuring the disorders, and the exousiastick authorising the officers of the kingdom of Christ: All which are invaded, invalidated and violated by this toleration.

Finding ourselves obliged, we say, so far at least, to witness against this new device to destroy what remains undestroyed of the work of God in our land, as to refuse to say a confederacy with them that say such a confederacy, and to stand aloof from all accession to, participation of, or communion with such a confederacy: We are therefore flouted at, as signs and wonders, and exceedingly filled with contempt, with the scorn of them that are at ease, and the contempt of the proud; and prosecuted with all rage and reproach, not only of the open and avowed adversaries, but also from professed friends, who have it for their work industriously to render us and our testimony odious both at home and abroad. But all this affliction imbittered with more ingredients of grief, and grievances than we have language to express, we think we could, through grace, not only with patience, but also with complacency, comport with, so long as it should please our gracious Father to measure it out to us, if we had faithful ministers, sent, and spirited of God, cloathed with his orderly commission to preach the everlasting gospel to us and to declare the whole counsel of God, and prosecute and propagate the testimony, so that we might get it transmitted to posterity.

Now (right reverend, learned, and godly) being in such a case (as may be obvious from the few foregoing hints) that we have neither access to solicit, nor clearness in point of success, to seek unto, nor prevail with our tolerated ministers for our succour in this case, except we should lose these things which we have wrought, destroy these things which we have been essaying to build, condemn what we have suffered for, contradict what we have been contending for, and so abandon a good cause, and lose a good conscience, and comply with the present corruptions; since they neither can, nor dare answer our desires in this matter: And so far are they from being willing to do it, that they are opposing all they can, and incensing the enemies against us †.

There.

† How humbling it ought to be to all flesh, to consider that many of these who sent this Letter, and particularly the principal peaman who in a short time after this, did concur, join with, and receive ordination from these same men here spoken of, even without any evidences of repentance for, resentment of, or relinquishing, but on the contrary defending their former compliances, and retaining their rooted prejudice against these people and their Testimony, must be left with the reader.

Therefore we must address ourselves with this supplicatory epistle to your venerable consistory, begging, and beseeching you in the bowels of Christ, to confer your helping hand in this case of necessity, that with that power you have received from Christ, you may admit unto, and confirm in the ministerial function, and send forth, fully instructed with the commission of Christ's ambassadors, to dispense the ordinances of Christ unto us, such as either now, or shortly hereafter we shall recommend unto your wisdom and faithfulness: And particularly at the time we humbly recommend our beloved brother, and much longed for in the Lord, Mr. Thomas Lining, candidate from the University of Utrecht, to whom we have sent our Letters Testimonial, testifying our experimental acquaintance with and high esteem of his blameless profession, zealous confession of the truths of Christ, exemplary conversation, and practical godliness, and other qualifications fitting him for that function wherewith we are desiring him to be invested, so far as is incumbent to us to know, or cognosce upon, with our unanimous call to him for procuring his potestative mission in the ministry.—We therefore earnestly request, intreat, invite, and obtest you, for the love of Christ, for the glory of God, for the propagation of his gospel, for the edification of his people in such a strait, that after due examination and trial of his qualifications, gifts, graces, and sufficiency for our edification you may be pleased in the order appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament, to confer upon him, and confirm him in the full power, ordination, and commission, of an ordained minister of the gospel of Christ, to preach, administer the sacraments, and exercise discipline and government according to Christ's appointment.—Earnestly desiring the help of your prayers for us in our low case.

We conclude with our appreciations of grace, mercy, and peace, counsel, conduct, success, and perseverance to you from the God of all grace and glory, And subscribe ourselves, &c.

It was further resolved that a Letter should be written and subscribed by Michael Shields, and sent to Mr. Hamilton then at *Embden*, acknowledging the sense we have of his being helpful to us in our low condition:—Which accordingly was done.—A copy of which followeth.

To the Right Honourable, and much Honoured Gentleman
 Mr. ROBERT HAMILTON, now sojourning in Emb-
 den.—The United Societies of some Presbyterians, per-
 secuted for the Testimony of the Church of Scotland, do
 wish grace, mercy, and peace.

Right Honourable, and much honoured in the Lord,

WE are under many obligations to acknowledge with thankful hearts, to the praise of God, and also with grateful remembrance of your care, diligence, zeal, and labour of love (and that so much the more that you have been upon our account so much exposed to rage and reproach, from all hands) that you have been very happily and honourably instrumental many times, and many ways, in strengthening and succouring us, in our lowest straits, and procuring help from strangers, when we could not see whence to hope for it: And that your exile for the cause of Christ hath not been so unpleasant to you, though attended with many afflicting circumstances, as it hath been profitable to us, in representing our case and vindicating our cause to strangers, and procuring to us pity, and sympathy from them, when we could get none at home.

Especially, and chiefly, it can never be forgotten by us, yea it will be memorated by them that are yet unborn, when you, and we are gone, how seasonably your hand was made use of, by the gracious disposal of our glorious Head and King, the mighty One of *Jacob*, as instrumental in sending to us a welcome messenger of peace, and glad tidings, fully instructed with the gospel of grace, our sometimes honoured minister, and now a glorified martyr for the word of God, and testimony of Jesus, Mr. James Renwick, whose praise shall be here perpetuated, as long as our Lord shall have an interest here to be contended for, or zeal for the same shall continue with the confessors of it.

O how were our hands strengthened, our hearts revived, refreshed, comforted, and confirmed in the ways of the Lord, even in the midst of our fiery furnaces, afflictions, persecutions, necessities, and distresses, when we could at any rate have access to the enjoyment of his ministry, in the Glens, Fenns, Mountains, Muirs, Mosses and remotest retirements of our wilderness, while

he was carrying the Lord's banner of love, and the standard of truth displayed among us, crying aloud and not sparing, as a voice crying in the wilderness, faithfully warning us of the sins, snares and dangers of the times; and bearing witness for the truths and duties opposed by enemies and abandoned by friends in our day: which, while alive, he fruitfully confirmed by his ministerial, and ambassador-becoming practice: Approving himself as the minister of God, in much patience, in necessities, afflictions, distresses, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand, and the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as a deceiver, and yet true, as unknown, and yet well known, as dying, and behold living, as chastened, and not killed, as sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things: And when dying, he faithfully crowned all, by overcoming through the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony, not loving his life unto the death for the truths of his princely Master, which he sealed with much patience, meekness, humility, constancy, steadfastness, courage, and resolution, love and zeal, as was confounding to enemies, convincing to neutrals, confirming to halts, comforting to friends, and admirable to all.

But now, alas! Sir, we are made to know the worth of such a minister, by the word of him; the want now, is as sorrowful, as the enjoyment for a while was joyful: Our detestable indifferency, our stupid sluggishness, our unthankfulness, unfaithfulness, unfruitfulness under, and contempt of the gospel, have provoked the holy Lord to remove him, and deprive us of his ministry: And the same procuring causes have promerited, and protracted this long, lasting, and weary famine of gospel ordinances, under which we still languish, wherein we are reduced to many mournful miseries, for want of ordained ministers.

Hence the ignorant are perishing, and like to be a prey to all errors now abounding, and encouraged under the wings of this toleration; the zealous for want of guides in hazard to run upon right-hand extravagancies;
the

the lukewarm, (which are the greatest number) in danger to decline to left-hand defections; backsliders waxing bold, and blessing themselves in their apostacies, conformities and compliances with the time's sins, snares, errors and corruptions. The generality are saying a confederacy with, and walking in the way of the people of this generation; and the Lord is become a *stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, a gin and a snare to both the houses of Israel, whereby many are fallen and broken, and snared and taken. The malignant and prelati- c party are insulting over us; the tolerated Presbyterians are inveighing bitterly against us; the halts between two opinions are inclining and declining still to the worse; many deeply exercised souls are distracted under legal terrors, while they have no comforter; many tempted with Satan's darts and the time's subdalous snares, are entangled and overcome, while they have no counsellor; *The poor and needy want water, and their tongue faileth for thirst*, desiring the sincere milk of the word, and cannot find it sincerely, publicly, powerfully and faithfully preached; innumerable children coming into, and going out of the world, and of several-years old, wanting baptism. The harvest is great, but labourers are few, and the few that are, are outwearied with work and many wrestlings under insupportable difficulties.

In the mean time, the persecution is very hot, and in many respects harder and heavier to conflict with than before the toleration, which as it hath brought ease to some, purchased at a dear rate of selling truth and shifting duty, so it hath brought greater bondage and heavier burdens to us, who as we are excluded, so dare no more partake of it than we durst of former snares offered under the notion of favours, from the same party, for the same ends. Prisons are daily filling, some threatned with death. One hath lately been murdered in the fields. Courts are holding up and down the country for taking up a roll of our names, offering all their liberty to go either to the Mass, or to the Quakers, or to the Prelatic curates, or to the tolerated meetings of Presbyterians; but interdicting under the pain of death, either to countenance our meetings in the fields, whither their fury hath forced us, or to converse or supply us with so much as a drink of water; and that which is more bitter, our tolerated brethren, gentlemen and ma-

ny ministers also, are present and assisting at these courts, informing against us, and instigating our persecutors against us. The gentlemen putting us from our tenements and habitations under them. But words are wanting to utter our grievances. But, Sir, we hope you are not a stranger, unacquainted or unconcerned,

In a word therefore, the design of all this confused representation of our dolorous case, is to recommend to your wonted care and sedulous and serious diligence this weighty case of procuring the supply of a faithful ordained minister, clothed with our Lord's commission, and potestative mission to dispense all his precious gospel-ordinances,—who may in some measure fill and succeed in the room of our renowned **RENWICK**, now removed.—And as we pray the Lord of the harvest, that he may conduct and countenance you in this endeavour with his formerly experienced assistance and propitious favour, and incline the hearts of his servants in the land of your exile to pity us and grant your requests; so we hope your representation and intercession with that reverend, and venerable Presbytery of the godly ministers at Embden in the behalf of such as we earnestly recommend, may be blessed with the like success that your faithful labours in this kind had with others heretofore, so as to induce them to concur in this great work and duty of pity and charity.

We request you therefore to lay it to heart, and laying it upon, and before the Lord, to lay out yourself as our intrusted orator, to recommend to these reverend, learned and godly ministers, our beloved and honoured brother, Mr. Thomas Lining, that according to our supplicatory letter to them, which we desire you to present and deliver to them in our name, with all submission they may confer upon him, after due trial, the full power of ministerial ordination, with imposition of hands, according to the order of Christ.

We desire also that his call and testimonial lately sent from us, may be presented to the Presbytery, with excuses of its informality. Withal protesting and obtesting you, that you carefully beware that nothing be done in that affair in substance or circumstance, which may directly or indirectly reflect upon, or seem to admit any recession from, or allow any novation not consonant to our covenanted reformation, acts of General Assemblies, Confession of Faith, Books of discipline, Propositions
concerning

concerning church-government and ordination of ministers; and that therefore you inform yourself both as to the members of that reverend and renowned Classis who may perform that action, that none may be intermixed who are not sound and stedfast in the Protestant and reformed testimony against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, heresies, sects and schisms, corruptions and defections, and all reprov'd novations.

And as to the way and manner of celebrating that solemn ordinance of ordination, that it be according to Christ's order, and not vitiated with human inventions, either of Prelatic encroachments, or sectarian prostitution of the power of the keys. And as to the subscription required of the candidate, that it be nothing dissonant from, or not confirmatory of the church of Scotland's testimony and confession, &c. withal, that you take care that his protestation may be admitted against any thing in that church, either in doctrine, worship, discipline or government, rites or ceremonies which are condemned by the standing constitutions of the church of Scotland, according to the word of God. And that you put the reverend, learned and godly ministers in mind, that as we presume their tenderness and piety will put a favourable construction on these our necessary cautions that we commend unto your prospection, as proceeding not from any jealousy we have of them, but from our solicitousness that we be neither imposed upon nor reproached upon occasion of this our address to them, as former experience obliges us to provide against: So we hope and desire that they will be pleased in their written testimony declaring and confirming his ordination, to signify their approbation of this our application to them, that we have done nothing but what might be incumbent on us in our circumstances in seeking foreign ordination. And to testify some weighty reasons, that in granting it they have done nothing but what is lawful and expedient to them in their capacity, with a disclaimer of any arrogation of power over the church of Scotland, further than to extend their cumulative help *hic* and *nunc* in this circumstantiated case of necessity, that so both they may have clearness to justify what they do in this matter, and we may have confidence to answer them that reproach us.

We intreat also, that with all earnestness you may endeavour to obtain from the same venerable Classis, the same

same access and opened door for the benefit of another brother, Mr. Alexander Shields, yet labouring among us as a probationer in the ministry, when he shall be ready, and we in case to spare his departure from us for that effect.

We add no more, but recommending you and this weighty affair to the gracious conduct and disposal of the infinitely wise Jehovah; we subscribe,

*Your afflicted brethren and companions in tribulation
for the cause of Christ,*

Subscribed in our name, by

MICH. SHIELDS.

From the wilderness of *Camp's-*
head-heights, Aug. 1st, 1688.

It was likewise resolved by the meeting that Patrick Walker should be desired to go (and another person with him) to Fife, and speak with some persons there who desired conference. These persons were of them who had been with James Ruffel, and were now desirous of information how matters were among the societies.— This was done accordingly.

It was also appointed by the meeting, that the first Thursday of October should be observed by the societies a day of humiliation, mourning and fasting before the Lord for the many heinous sins committed at the courts which were kept in summer in the five western shires; and in particular for the renouncing of our holy covenants by many, especially in Edinburgh, in the time of the search there upon the 25th of *July* last.

And the next General Meeting was appointed to meet at *Wanlockhead*, upon the 24th of *October*,

AMONG the ways, means and methods to pave an easy entrance to the introduction of Popery into this land again; that of granting of the toleration hath been conducible, as the sad effects thereof evidenced; for with it did the whole land comply, and under its shadow and shelter did they live peaceably and quietly, except the United Societies, with which, as they did not join, nor could, considering the fountain from whence it flowed, absolute power claimed by a creature; the channel thro' which

which it did run, which was the suspending and disabling of our penal laws; the restrictions and limitations wherewith it was clogged, and the end for which it was granted, which was to make way for the introduction of Popery; so they were persecuted with the same rigour as formerly, being so dealt with both before, and since the last meeting.

And to the end that the coming to light of any thing that tended to the discovery of the justice of their cause who were suffering, might be hindered, and their vindication from mistakes and reproaches cast upon them, stopt; a proclamation was issued forth, discharging the importing, vending or selling of some books, as *Lex Rex*, *Naphtali*, *Jus Populi*, &c. and among others was one called the *Hind let Loose*, (some of which had fallen into their hands) wherein the testimony maintained by the United Societies is vindicated, and their sufferings for adhering to the same justified, and as the sufferings of the persecuted are defended, so the cruelty, treachery and tyranny of the persecutors are discovered. This did gall them, when they beheld their evil deeds evidently characterized, and ~~—————~~ laid open before the world; and that they might fear or expect any opposition to the carrying on of their wicked designs, and bringing to pass of their cursed projects (brought to a great height already) from the five western shires, of whom they always feared the greatest hindrance thereunto, especially these people therein, who had been always great opposers of, and non-compliers with their wicked courses; it was determined by them that the country people in that bounds should be disarmed: Whereupon secret orders were sent to the soldiers lying in the west to go through and search for arms; which was exactly obeyed, and many of them gotten; whereby the people were laid open to be a prey to any butchering cut-throat who might assault them.

After this, a cruel circuit court was intended to be kept in these shires, and gentlemen pitched upon to be the members thereof, and in some places they were begun. The end of their appointment was to find out and punish those who had been accessory to the rescue of Mr. David Houftoun.

If these courts had gone on, the same would have tended much to the affliction of the United Societies; but the Lord, who oftimes gives to his people enlarge-
ment

ment out of bondage, at a time and in a way unexpected and not looked for, did at this time both prevent the fears of his own people, and the designs of his enemies.

When the proud, insolent and cruel enemies had none to wreak themselves upon but these societies, the Lord raised up against them opposites more mighty and strong, whereby they got other things to think upon and other work to do, than always to be employed in persecuting a poor, wasted and distressed people. For, when the news of the landing of the Dutch under the command of the Prince of Orange was noised abroad, great was the diligence and preparation for opposing them. Proclamations were put forth for the rendezvousing of the gentlemen, heritors and militia, ordering beacons to be set upon the top of some hills to give warning of the approach of ships, when they should be seen; and commanding all to be in readiness betwixt 16 and 60. The standing forces, being about six regiments of horse, foot and dragoons, went into England, being sent for by their king. At this time the country was full of commotions and rumours of war; every one looking for changes and revolutions, some hoping for, and others fearing the same; and almost all were expecting the ensuing of these calamities that attend war, as its inseparable companion. However, the generality of people were desiring, yea longing for the landing of the Dutch, though many knew not for what they desired them.

In the mean time of these reelings, as above mentioned, our General Meeting did convene upon the 24th of *October*, at *Wanlockhead*, in the shire of *Nithsdale*.—Where, passing things of lesser moment, there deliberated upon, I shall give a short (but true) account of the most material things there spoken of, and agreed unto.

Mr. Thomas Lining having gone abroad in 1684, in order to the perfecting of his studies, that when opportunity should offer he might seek and get ordination; being desired thereto by a General Meeting—to whom he left a subscribed testimony, declaring his principles and resolutions. He went first to *Leewarden*, where he remained more than two years, living privately in the family with Mr. Hamilton, and getting teaching from one Mr. Gerkima, a minister in that place who shewed

him much kindness. The rest of the time of his being abroad, he staid at the University of Groningen and Utrecht, except that he came home in *July* 1687. And having staid until *October* thereafter, before his departure, at a General Meeting he left a paper containing his mind and resolution about some things; a true copy whereof followeth.

Very dear Friends;

AT my departure from you, I shewed you my mind (at the desire of the General Meeting) anent the controversies of our time, and likewise my willingness to go abroad to the end I may be fitted more for my generation-work, which the Lord might call me unto: so now at this present time, I declare my mind to be the same about things in controversy as formerly it was, and that I am willing and desirous, when lawfully called and sent, to serve the Lord as a Labourer (though unworthy of that piece of honour) in his vineyard; and do engage myself not to subject myself to an examination for licence and ordination, but to such persons or Presbytery as ye shall be satisfied with, providing your exceptions be just and valid; and that I shall acquaint you before therewith, that I may both have the help of your prayers in such a weighty business, and your friendly advice, providing that correspondence with you be not stopped by wars or some such extraordinary impediment.

This also I leave as an evidence of my concurring with you in the Lord's cause as it is presently stated against Popery, Prelacy, lawless toleration and tyranny, and all sinful compliances and defections.—As witness, written and subscribed with my hand, *Oct. 5th, 1687.*

Sic Subscibitur,

THOMAS LINING.

Mr. Lining after his going abroad, staid for some time in the university, at length obtained ordination the end of *August*, or the beginning of *September*, 1688. from the classis of Embden. Application for that effect being made to them by Mr. Hamilton.

After his ordination he took voyage presently for Scotland, where he arrived in *September* last, and came to this meeting; who, before they would give him a joint

and unanimous call, were desirous to know the way of his ordination, and what ministers they were who ordained him. This they judged necessary, in regard that the ministers in the Netherlands had been called either *Erastian*, depending upon the magistrate, or *Cocceian*.—Therefore he was desired to give some account of his ordination at Embden, for the satisfaction of all concerned.

Whereupon he declared before the meeting, that he had diligently made enquiry about the ministers there, and found by several discoveries, (which he instanced) that they were neither *Erastian*, depending on the magistrate, nor *Cocceian*; and that they had accepted of our call and letters testimonial, which were sent by the last meeting; that they had continued his trial and examination upon all the heads of divinity for 21 days; and thereafter they had ordained him with solemn imposition of hands, indefinitely, without a relation to any particular church: For which he produced their testificate, subscribed by Mr. Petrius Ritzius preses of the Classis, (as also a letter from Mr. Hamilton.)

When Mr. Lining had given this relation, he went out a little, and the meeting, after deliberation, resolved upon giving him a call: Whereupon he was elected and called by the elders and brethren of the meeting to be their minister.

Here follows the substance of Mr. Hamilton's Letter.

Worthy Friends,

THE Lord hath been trying his poor church, and especially in that land for a long time, and hath made great discoveries there, beyond what the wit of man could ever have done, so that now both right and left hand enemies are fairly discovered and stated under the banner of Antichrist, in a direct opposition to God and his Anointed, and that both as he is King in his own church, and hath the sovereignty over his mystical body; and as King of the world, whose incommunicable prerogative it is to be absolute; so that he hath fairly stated his own cause, and seems to be in an open way to vindicate the same, with its followers, to the conviction of some, and the comfort of others, the shame and confusion of opposers: All which, I think, says, that he is to bring on ruin upon an apostate, backsliden secure and rebellious

rebellious generation. Hitherto he has been smiting the lintle of the door and shaking the posts, but now seemingly he is to slay with the sword, that he that fleeth, shall not flee away, and he that escapeth, shall not be delivered.—Hitherto he has been holding a bitter cup to the heads of his own, making them to drink the brim thereof, not to destroy, but to save them, and that they might see what metal they are of, and that to their everlasting joy and consolation: But enemies must drink the bottom with the dregs, and be made to see that they have been digging their own graves, and also to see and read to their conviction and torment, sincerity, truth and faithfulness manifested in these whom they have been reproaching, spoiling, torturing and murdering.

The Lord will be magnified in the generation of the righteous. He will still exalt his glory in all Scotland's confusions, reelings and storms, as special cures win a name to a physician, and great victories gain honour to the principal agents; so the Lamb and Lion of the tribe of Judah, the King of saints, by carrying his little, little flock through special trials, will magnify the glory of his power, love and conduct, to the conviction and astonishment of the world, like some skilful physicians that make their servants swallow some strong poison, that they may shew their skill, and in haste patients to themselves: So our wise Lord puts his people to great plunges and difficulties, that he alone may be employed and glorified in them, and in the eyes of all on-lookers, in his wisdom, power, mercy and faithfulness in carrying them sweetly and cleanly through, without making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. By this he advances his name, and makes it great to the ends of the earth,—and thereby gaining multitudes to himself at once, that will be as so many heralds to sound forth the praises of his greatness and goodness from generation to generation.

I shall say no more, but labour to keep the good, the good old way, seeking to be found in his way when he cometh, keeping the word of Christ's patience, standing fast to your post, and close to your Master, in readiness to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes, for the winds are now like to be let loose, and it is to be feared many shall be blown away with them, although not one grain of his true wheat shall be lost, being preserved by the power of God unto salvation: He is to do a great

work in the earth, and he will not be unmindful of his own: Improve what you are getting to his praise, and credit him for more, and then it may be but an earnest of what the land and his followers may expect. He has been much seen in managing of your last affair, and to my poor capacity is fitting our worthy friend Mr. Thomas Lining, for the work he is calling him to. O praise him, for he is doing great things for you.

I hope ye will not be unmindful of me, ye know my case in a great measure:—my design is, if the Lord will, upon the first breaking out of wars to visit you, and take a share of your lot, and again I lay it upon you to pray the Lord may open a door for me; and if not, that I may be kept faithful in every lot that I may be trysted with, to the glory and praise of his rich grace.

The bearer will signify my diligence at *Groningen*; as to that affair of Mr Boyd, I shall labour to fulfil your request; as for any further, I refer you to the bearer.—Praying the Lord may be a sun, and a shield unto you all, I am, as ever,

Worthy friends, yours in the Lord Jesus,

SEPT. 4th, 1688.

ROBT. HAMILTON.

THE next thing the Meeting took to their consideration was to consult upon what would be our duty when the *Dutch* should land, of which there were great expectations that it would presently occur.—Whereupon the question was propounded first in general thus.

What ought to be done in case the *Dutch* with other confederate Protestants should make an expedition into this kingdom, providing their declaration, and ends of the war were right?—Next it was divided into several branches for the better understanding thereof.—As

(1.) Whether duty and safety did call for a rising in arms, or to sit still and hide?

(2.) If there should be a rising resolved, when this should be attempted?

(3.) Who should be admitted to concur?

(4.) Whether there should be an association with the *Dutch*, or continuing in a separate body?

(5.) Whether there should be any treating with them

in such a separate appearance, or if any, how far might we proceed?

These things being thus propounded, after mutual conference and debates, concerning every one of them, the mind of every member of the meeting, to each of these proposals being enquired.—Who after deliberation, did give it, the result of which was these conclusions following.

As to the *first*, It was resolved that duty and safety seemed to require rising in a posture of defence, to avoid snares, and seemingly ineluctable destruction, when all would be required to side themselves, and declare whom they were for, and concur with some party, for it would be a reproach, when now the quarrel would be stated for religion and liberty, if they who have borne arms hitherto for the defence thereof, should now lay them by as indifferent.

To the *second*, It was resolved that our appearance in that posture should not be sudden, for that would be to expose ourselves as a prey, nor that it should be at all, if the expedition should only be in England. But that it should only be attempted in the forementioned circumstances, when the expedition in that kingdom were so far advanced as all the country were in a combustion, and generally pressed to declare themselves on what side they were. And to this effect, it was agreed that our gathering should be toward that place of the country commanded by the *Dutch*, and that some should be appointed to wait at Edinburgh, to give intelligence to all quarters, when they should land in Scotland: And there to appoint time and place of another General Meeting, which might conclude whether the case required a gathering in arms or not.—Accordingly some were chosen for the foresaid end, who also went and stayed there.

The *third*, Being much doubted, and debated whether compliers with the enemy, might be admitted to join in arms; it was resolved in this method. That first a declaration containing the cause, occasion, and ends of our appearing be emitted. Then a day of humiliation appointed to mourn for all the steps of defection and compliances; wherein all joiners should be enjoined to confess their respective accession to the sins mourned over: and then that the covenant should be solemnly renewed with application to all the breaches of it, old and late, in our day, engaging all joiners against all compliance

pliance in time coming. After all which, if compliers should declare their agreement with the declaration, join in the humiliation, confessing their compliances, and subscribe the covenant, engaging against all compliance for the future, they might then be admitted. This is not to be understood of them who had forfeited their lives who were not to be admitted. And concerning these who were guilty of some gross steps of defection and compliance; it could not be determined if they should be admitted or not: But it was provided that if they were, it should only be as single soldiers and not to be officers.

As to the *fourth*, It was concluded unanimously that we could not have an association with the *Dutch*, in one body, nor come formally under their conduct, being such a promiscuous conjunction of reformed Lutheran malignants and sectaries, to join with whom, were repugnant to the testimony of the church of Scotland.

As to the *fifth*, After some debate it was agreed, that they might be treated with, so far as to keep some correspondence with them, to co-operate together against the common enemy, to inform them of their motion, to take ammunition from them, and to admit some of them to come and teach us the art of war, but not to take them for our officers, nor come under their conduct*.

The next General Meeting was appointed to be at

In the interval of after this meeting nothing was expected but confusions and commotions. The United Societies were waiting when opportunity should offer for reducing their foresaid resolutions into practice.

In the mean time they enjoyed peace, and got a breathing from that cruel persecution under which they had long been groaning.

Upon the 5th of November, The prince of Orange with his army consisting of about 14,000 men, did land in England; not long after their landing there were strange revolutions in that kingdom, in bringing to pass of which

* There is no mention of their appointing any fast-days here, as was ordinary formerly. From this time forward many old men who lived in that time, date the beginning of their declension from their former principles and practices, faithfulness, zeal and tenderness.

which, the Lord's right hand and arm did gloriously appear, and the hand of man very little.—That huge army of 30,000 English, Scots, and Irish did melt away, most part of all, not giving so much as one stroke. The tyrant James, was tumbled from his throne, and made to run, his Queen and greatest courtiers glad to hide themselves, some of whom were taken. In Scotland the changes and revolutions were neither few nor small. That stroke which was given to Papists and their idolatry, was not the result of long contrived counsels, nor begun, nor effectuate by wise or great men, but done in a sudden by children and others not much esteemed, tho' afterward their quarrel was espoused by others.

Witness that which was done at Edinburgh, December 10th.—The like stroke they met with at London, about the same time, as if the same had been before contrived: Behold on a sudden a very wonderful alteration. He who not long before, claimed an absolute power, and prerogative royal, which all were to obey without reserve, was made to flee, and could get few to obey him, yea despised by many of these whom he exalted: The wicked were ensnared in the work of their own hands, and the counsel of the heathen brought to nought. These who formerly were persecute are now in quiet, and these who had been persecutors, are in fear, and glad to hide themselves. These who formerly were a terror to many, are now feared for these whom they made afraid before. These are the doings of the Lord, and should be wondrous in our eyes.

In this reeling time, the Societies were not idle, for not only some of them were active in what was done against popish idolatry at Edinburgh, but what was done of that kind in other places of the country, was done for the most part by them; and they were willing to have done more, if it had been in their power: zeal against Papists, and their idolatry, at this time was very lively and keen: But that which was most the occasion of their appearing was the alarming noise of the Papists burning Kirkcudbright which did run through the country: Whereupon they looked upon this as an opportunity for them to appear for the defence of religion, the country, and themselves.

Accordingly they did appear in great numbers (being the most forward to it, of any in the country) especially in Nithdale and Galloway, (in which places they destroyed

stroyed the relicts and monuments of idolatry, which they got in houses belonging to papists) and some of them, *viz.* in Clydesdale stayed together in arms until the General Meeting, which convened upon the 3d of January, 1689. at Douglas, in the shire of Clydesdale.

THE which day the meeting being set there was a paper of apology, &c. agreed unto,—which they concluded should be forth-with published intending thereby to apologize for, and shew the cause of their rising, and continuing in arms, lest they should be misconstrued; and to clear themselves of some aspersions cast upon them, particularly that of robbing of the Curate of Carluke, for which they were blamed; and to declare their resolution to disperse, that so the country might see that they desired not to be burdensome, except when necessity called for it. And also by this to signify their adherence to the cause for which they had been suffering.

This paper was published at Douglas the 4th of January, 1689. where (after Mr. Alexander Shields had prayed and sung a part of a psalm) it was read: There were present Messrs. Thomas Lining, William Boyd, and David Houstoun, and about 300 armed men, as also several of the inhabitants of the town; immediately after which, the armed men went out of the town, except those who were concerned to stay upon the account of the General Meeting; and that the paper might be the better seen by all concerned, several copies thereof were written that night, which were spread abroad through the country.

Immediately after the dismissing of the armed men, the General Meeting convened again, to whom was given in a paper by these men representing the societies of Nithsdale, containing some articles for the better regulating of companies in that juncture. This was judged necessary to be given in for preventing of disorders, which in this confused time might fall out among them while they were in arms, and whereof some had occurred already.

It was read and considered by the meeting, and they desired captains and lieutenants of companies to meet together in order to the condescending upon these or the like articles, and to endeavour to get the same put in practice, that order might be kept and offences prevented.—

ted.—But nevertheless the same was not done, although it was judged necessary.

It was moved by some, that the meeting might consider upon the drawing up and sending an address, with an account of our grievances sustained by us under the late tyranny, to the Prince of Orange, which the circumstances seemed to call for at our hands; whereupon it was resolved that the same should be written and brought to the next meeting, who were to consider upon the time and method of sending them. The doing of this was judged necessary, that as thereby we would acknowledge the Prince to be a honoured instrument of breaking the heavy yoke of oppression from off our necks; so we would take opportunity to put him in mind of the great and wonderful things the Lord did for him, which called for suitable returns at his hands; withal truly representing our cause, for adhering whereunto we had been suffering these years past; and laying open our case before him, which he might be ignorant of, being a stranger; and craving his aid and help for redressing of our grievances.—What followed upon this shall be shewn afterwards.

There was a letter presented and read at this meeting, sent from James Dick, Robert Dun, Robert Cathcart, &c. in Carrick and Galloway, (who formerly had separated from and opposed Mr. James Renwick, of whom some account is already given) directed to Kerland; in which they desired some might be sent to converse with them, in order to union.

The meeting having a desire to have differences removed in a right way, resolved to send some men to hear what they would say. So William Harris, John Mack in Evandale, William Rigg and Andrew Ross in Carrick, were chosen for that effect, who were desired to give account of their diligence to the next meeting.

Accordingly these men met with those of Galloway and Carrick at Sanguhar, *January 23d*, where Robert Cathcart, in name of the rest, propounded first, That seeing we joined with such ministers as were altogether extraneous of the church of Scotland, there could be no accommodation be thought on, till either we disowned them, or else that they should submit themselves to the ministers of the church of Scotland;—and they desired we would make address to these ministers of the church of Scotland;—as to other proposals (though they said

they had more) they refused to give them, seeing we could not agree about the first.

When the meeting heard this account, they wondered what these men could mean: if they intended union, the requiring of that which they sought as the foundation thereof, was not the way to attain it. For, to disown our ministers (except they would do that which in conscience they could not do, as matters are now circumstantiate) would have been provoking to God, and afforded matter of mocking of us to men.

The laird of Earlstoun having heard of the proclaiming of the Prince of Orange's declaration at Glasgow by Mr. Boyd and some others with him, was offended thereat. And to evidence his dislike thereof, wrote (being at that time prisoner in Blackness) to James Wilson, desiring him in his name, to protest before the General Meeting against that deed. Which James Wilson did; acquainting the meeting that he had Earlstoun's letter for it. With which protestation some of the General Meeting joined. And the whole meeting declared their dissatisfaction with the reading of that declaration, which as it was a deed rashly gone about without common consent; so, though they would not meddle with it as it was the declaration of the Prince of Orange who was a stranger; yet to espouse the same as their declaration so abruptly, they thought it too lame and defective, for there was no mention made in it of the covenanted work of reformation.

Upon the account of the late emergents, the meeting thought it their duty to set apart some time for prayer and thanksgiving; as follows:

It is earnestly desired that Tuesday the 15th of *January* may be kept a day of thanksgiving for the wonderful providences of God towards us in breaking in some measure the yoke of persecution, and animating some to the destroying of the monuments of idolatry in the land, &c.

Also, that in the same day we may be earnest in prayer, that we may find favour in the eyes of those whom the Lord hath made instruments of our relief.

THE generality of people in the five western shires, considering the providences of the time, which were indeed wonderful,—did look upon the same as an opportunity put in their hands of shaking off the yoke of ab-
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jured Prelacy, under which they had been long groaning, and the casting out of the kirks these intruding hirelings the curates, resolving never to subject to them, and to do all which lies in their power to hinder the intrusion again.

Accordingly many curates were put from their kirks which they had long possessed. Those who were most active in this, were of the United Societies, who at this time shewed not only zeal and forwardness in that, but also in destroying Popish idolatry; and herein they were helped of the Lord to carry Christianly, as was acknowledged by their very enemies; for though they shewed much strictness in searching for idolatrous things in houses where they got intelligence of their being hid; yet they did not wrong any thing in the house, nor take ought out of the same; witness that which they did at Traquair; neither did they convert any of these idolatrous things (though some of them were of great value) to private or public uses, but brought the same to public Mercat-crosses; and there before many witnesses destroyed them by fire.

These things which were done at this time by the United Societies (mountain-men or hill-men as they were then called) made such a noise through the land, that the very report thereof occasioned a great terror among Papists, malignants and Curates, and they were much afraid of them.—Here is a change to be remarked!—These men, high and great in their own esteem, some of whom feared neither God nor man, are now afraid of these poor people whom before they contemned and despised.

In this reeling and unsettled time, according to the appointment of the last meeting, A General Meeting did convene in the town of Sanquhar, in the shire of Nithsdale, upon *January 23d.*—An account of what was deliberated and resolved upon by them, with the way of managing the same, I shall here set down.

Alexander Gordon of Earlstoun, after his being prisoner a long time (*viz.* since *May 1683*) was at length set at liberty out of the castle of Blackness (being among the last who was liberate after the Revolution) in a way and upon terms no-way dishonouring to the cause for which he had been suffering, the same being without any engagement by word or writing to these who were his

persecutors, or his freedom so much as sought by him; yea when coming out of the castle, he took instruments in the hands of the clerk of that place that he was the same as to his principles when he was going out, as when he came in there. Being at liberty he was desirous to see his friends and old acquaintances in the West, whereupon he came to Sanquhar, and he was desired to be present at the meeting. When he came in, and had sat a little, he rose up voluntarily of his own free choice, and without being desired he spake to the meeting to this effect,

That after long absence the Lord in his providence had ordered their meeting together again, they knew his errand in going abroad, and how he fell into the enemies hands, and what trials and tossings he had endured, while among their hands: That for a while after he was taken, it was not so right in matters between God and his soul, as it was afterward. And when it came to the trial, he did not carry as it became a prisoner for truth, for he did petition the enemies, in which petition were all the evils imaginable which (he said) was dishonourable to God, and offensive to his people: When he had ended, he removed a little. When the meeting had communed among themselves concerning him, they were satisfied with his ingenuity which appeared in his confessing of what he had done wrong when a prisoner, the certainty whereof, they knew not before. However seeing several, and various reports of his carriage that then were spread abroad, and credited by many: And that they had been blamed of being partial upon his account.

It was thought expedient to go to him in private, and enquire at himself concerning some things wherewith he was charged: And for his own exoneration, and their satisfaction, to desire him to be free: which, with his answers to each of them follow, as they were proposed by two men to him. After apologizing that they hoped he would not be offended at their freedom, they desired he would be pleased to satisfy them in giving answers to some few things.

1st, If after he was apprehended, he had any hand in discovering the plot in England, for which he was much blamed? He altogether denied his having any hand in this.

2^{dly}, If

2dly, If ever he said before the enemies, that he would take the Test, as was reported he did? This he also denied: And shewed what way he was mistaken in it, which was thus. One time when Edward Aitken (who was taken with him) and he were before Queensberry, who asked at Edward if he would take the Test, for (said he) Earlstoun hath said he will take it; whereupon Edward said to Earlstoun, will ye take the Test? To this Earlstoun did not answer, but turned about to Queensberry, and said, would ye have him be like the witches? To which he said, was that to renounce his baptism? So the speaking in that manner, and not giving an answer to Edward made him suppose that Earlstoun had said, he would take the Test.

3dly, If he made any farther discovery of the plot, after it was found out, as it was said he did? This he likewise denied, except one time when threatened with the boots, by the council, unless he would make a discovery thereof, he told them he could tell them no more than what they had got already, but that he heard some of themselves had a hand in it. In like manner he denied that he told of Mr. Haddow's quarters in London (as was reported he did) neither knew what way it was discovered unless they had got a direction of a letter to him, among his papers which were seized on at Shields.

4thly, If he knew what was the nature of the petition given in by him to the council: He declared, he knew not, which made his doing thereof the more heinous, but he said there were all kinds of evils in it. The men returned and acquainted the meeting with what Earlstoun had said to them concerning those things they were desired to ask him about. So it was concluded by them, as most expedient, that he might be desired to be present at the meeting, though not a member thereof. This was thought fittest that none might have reason to charge them with partiality, in admitting him, while they would not have done so with others. So he came in.

After this, when the meeting was speaking about addressing of the prince of Orange. Earlstoun declared his dissatisfaction with the reading of his declaration which occasioned some debate between him and Mr. Boyd. Thereafter continuing therein a little space, Earlstoun entered his protestation against receiving into the meeting any who had espoused a malignant interest; as he said,
these

these who had read the Prince's declaration had done, seeing by their reading thereof, they had owned him, and espoused his quarrel, while in the mean time, they knew not well what he was for; neither had he given conditions on his part, nor security for religion. The meeting shewed their dislike of the reading of the Prince's declaration. (*Yet they admitted the readers to be members of the meeting*) However, Earlstoun would not stay in the meeting, though he was earnestly desired; his going away was somewhat grievous to them.

The meeting considering the confusions which were at the last meeting and other meetings before; for avoiding the like at the time, they concluded, That the ministers and elders should go apart by themselves, and consult and deliberate upon matters incumbent for them. [Let none from this be so far mistaken, as to think that before this time ministers and elders did sit as members of General Meetings, for they were only present there to give their advice and counsel, which was necessary to be sought, and requisite for them to give.] That these that had command over companies, as captains, lieutenants, &c. should meet together, and deliberate upon matters relating to them. And that the General Meeting should meet by themselves, and consult about matters wherein they were concerned; and in things doubtful to seek advice from the ministers. This resolution was put in practice upon the morrow; and for that night they parted*.

Upon the morrow, *January 24th*, the General Meeting convened, when it was unanimously concluded by them, That it was a necessary duty to renew the covenants. Some of them agreed to this only for themselves, not having the minds of their societies therein. Others desired that their societies might be acquainted therewith, that they might have time to think upon, and prepare for so grave and serious a work. And others spoke not only for themselves, but for their societies also.

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* The reason of this foregoing conclusion appears to have been occasioned by Earlstoun's Protestation against Mr. Boyd, &c. which severals adhered unto; and others who favoured what Mr. Boyd had done, condemned the Protestation, which caused hot debates; therefore they found it necessary for carrying on their designs more secretly, without apprising the people thereof, to follow this method: whether there was partiality in the case of Earlstoun, and Mr. Boyd, the Reader will judge.

However, they all referred the drawing up of the steps of defection and breaches of covenant, and fixing upon the day for that solemn action, to the ministers; with which they (the ministers) were acquainted.

The ministers and elders condescended upon the 3d of *March* for said work. The reason of appointing it so soon, was to have it before the down-sitting of the Convention of Estates, which was to be upon the 24th of *March*; for then affairs might come to some settlement, and it would not be so proper for us to do it as in this interregnum, and time of anarchy.

But betwixt and that time, there was a fast-day agreed upon, viz. The first Thursday of *February*, which our societies were desired to keep as a day of fasting and prayer, for preparation to our intended solemn renewing the covenants, that we might be helped to a right sight and sense of the breaches, and a right understanding and impression of the duties thereof.

As also, there was another General Meeting appointed to meet at *Crawford-John*, upon the 13th of *February*, 1689. Against which time, the acknowledgment of sins and breaches of covenant, &c. were to be drawn up, and there to be read. And likewise our address to the Prince, with our grievances, to be drawn up, and then and there to be deliberated upon and condescended unto.

The ministers and elders fearing that disorders might happen in putting out of the Prelatic curates from the kirks in the way and manner lately practised, whereby the cause might be wronged, and the owners thereof reproached: For preventing whereof, they agreed upon a paper to be given in by the people of each parish to the Curate, which they expected would make him afraid to preach, or stay any longer there; the tenor of which was:

“ WE, belonging to the Parish of ———, having now long groaned under the insupportable yoke of Prelacy, and having suffered a long continued tract of manifold cruel oppressions and persecutions for many years, upon the account of our not owning and submitting unto the intrusion of Episcopal Curates; and withal, being touched with such zeal to the house of our God, that we cannot endure any longer to see it made and continue to be a den of thieves, who have not entered in at Christ's door,

door, but by the way of men's usurpation; And remembering the obligation of our solemn covenants to endeavour the extirpation of Prelacy; and being resolved to prosecute it by all approved means to the utmost, as the Lord shall enable us, Do therefore, to prevent other tumults, warn you — to surcease and desist from preaching and all other ministerial exercises in the kirk of — and to depart from the cure and benefice of the said kirk and to deliver up the keys of the same, under certification, that if you refuse, you shall be forced to do it."

This paper was brought to the meeting and there read; the most part of whom agreed therewith, and resolved that copies should be given by people in the parishes where Curates yet were.—This was put in practice in several places.

The General Meeting considering the great want of men of known integrity, skilled in the exercise of arms, —desired that diligence be used to find men skilled in that exercise, (providing they had not been active in carrying on the late persecution) who might be employed to exercise companies for wages.

The captains and lieutenants agreed upon some things which they sent to the General Meeting; as

1st, That the societies of every shire shall appoint officers, according to the number of men that they can join with in that shire.

2^{dly}, That these officers meet together for consultation before the General Meeting that the country be not burdened, nor the meeting confused, and that they choose some among themselves to present to the General Meeting what they have concluded.

3^{dly}, That the officers who shall come to said meeting, shall have a commission subscribed by all the company.

There was a letter directed to our ministers from our friends in Ireland, read at the meeting giving some relation of their condition; also a man of their society gave an account of their case, and of their earnest desire to have some of our ministers to come and preach the gospel to them.

The Meeting concluded upon writing a letter to them; which accordingly was done, and carried by Mr. David Houstoun minister.

It contained our sense of their present case, and desire of sympathy with them, also apologizing for the not coming of some of our ministers to them at the time,—but that afterward they might come over: However wishing the labours of Mr. David Houstoun who was coming (and did go presently after this) might be blessed with success, withal refuting that calumny of his and our separation, as also, some general account of the wonderful providences which have occurred of late, with our desires that they may be helped to carry rightly under their present lot, &c*.

There was a proposal by some, desiring advice of the meeting what method to use at this time, to get the restitution of what was most injuriously taken from them by persecutors; and payments of debts from these who refused to pay the same, in the time of persecution, during which space neither had they freedom to go to the law to pursue therefore, nor ground to expect redress though they had gone.

The Meeting perceiving that some was too bent to take redress of these wrongs rashly at their own hand in doing whereof some disorders might be committed, whereby the cause, their brethren, and themselves would suffer reproach, for preventing whereof they they thought it expedient that such persons as were in the foresaid cases, should not at their own hand take redress; seeing there were now some hopes of getting these, and other things redressed in a legal and orderly manner. However this was agreed to, that these who had been so wronged might go to their injurers, or these who had debts owing to them, might go to their debtors, and in sobriety and civility seek restitution, and payment, which if obtained it was well; but if refused, they might use more sharpness, in telling them they would get it from them another way.

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+ This Letter is printed at length in the volume of Mr. Renwick's Letters, Page 421. — In which it is observable that they apologize for the not coming of some of their ministers to them, while in the mean time they were sending Mr. Houstoun, and they had no more actual ministers save Mr. Lining. They likewise deny that Mr. Houstoun and they were separate, yet it is certain that he shewed dissatisfaction with severals of their new measures and managements, and probably they feared more opposition, which made them willing to want him, as they were shortly to renew the covenants, and to supplicate the Convention of Estates, by which it appears that the majority were now changing their old, and adopting new principles and practices.

The Meeting considering that the prince of Orange being to indict the calling of a convention of estates, and that the election of Commissioners for shires and burghs was presently to be set about, did find themselves called for their own exoneration to do somewhat according to their station and capacity to hinder the wrong choosing of these Commissioners, in the shires where they lived; whereupon it was resolved that friends in every place of the country, lay out themselves to speak to these gentlemen (whom they could get access unto) who had a vote in the said election,—that fit and qualified persons, well affected to the cause might be chosen.—Though this resolution was not put in practice; yet the equivalent, if not a better, was done; the occasion of which was this.

Some people in Lesmahagow, being desirous to have the concurrence of our friends in that parish in representing grievances to the ensuing convention desired them to draw up a paper for the same, and to employ whom they pleased to write it, and they would join therewith: whereupon they sent to Mr. Shields (who was then in Cumnock,) to seek his advice therein.—He and some others, did look upon it as expedient and very necessary in this juncture to give in a paper subscribed, to the gentlemen who were to convene at Lanerk for electing of Commissioners for the shire of Clydesdale, desiring them to make choice of men well affected to religion, and friends to the country, and such as in the time bygone were not actively seeking the ruin of both, &c. The paper was written by Mr. Shields. And the man returned with a copy thereof to these who sent him. They all agreed with it, and got it subscribed with very many hands. As also it was thought expedient that copies of said paper should be sent through the shires where our friends dwelt, to the end that the same, or like paper, might be agreed upon, and given in by each parish, subscribed by as many hands as could be gotten, to the gentlemen meeting for electing Commissioners for the shire, as the convention of Estates.

This accordingly was put in practice; for most part of all the parishes in the five Western shires, did agree upon the foresaid or the like paper, which being subscribed with very many hands, who chose two or three men in name of the rest, to give it in to the gentlemen. Who accordingly went and delivered it to them.

THE time betwixt the last meeting and this was not long, the same being hastened upon these accounts: That the Acknowledgment of sins, and breaches of Covenant, and Engagement to Duties, might be seen and considered, and copies thereof gotten, and that the day for the solemn renewing of the Covenants might be the more deliberately fixt on; likewise, to conclude upon our grievances and address, to be sent to the prince of Orange. The delay of either of these, was not thought expedient.

In this interval, the country, as before, was in an unsettled state, as is usual in an interregnum——Although the late tyrannical government was overturned, and the power and strength of its administrators broken; yet a right and lawful government in its room, was not as yet set up, and constitute: Papists and malignants continued still in great fears, they having of late gotten such a sudden and unexpected stroke, which had so amazed and confounded them, that they had not as yet recovered and gathered their spirits: Many Curates were put from their kirks, so that in all the five Western shires, scarce one of them durst preach in a kirk. Several of them went into Edinburgh for shelter: Where Prelate Paterfon and his brother Sir William, did instigate severals of the college of Justice to rise in arms, as was said, to defend the City, but in effect to defend the Bishops, and Curates against the West country-men, whose coming they expected, and of whom they were much afraid.

Accordingly the writers did form themselves into four companies under four captains, and continued mustering and keeping guard, until they were disbanded by a declaration which the prince of Orange emitted, after he had accepted of the administration of affairs, which in this juncture devolved upon him until the sitting of the convention of estates, by some noblemen, and gentlemen who met at St. James's, after his arrival there.

This disbanding made them a little to droop, and grow faint; who while they were in arms boasted that they would defend their Bishops and Curates against the Mountain-men (so termed they the Societies) who in the mean time enjoyed great peace and quietness.

ACCORDING to the appointment of the last Meeting, a General Meeting did convene at *Crawford-John*, in Clydesdale, upon the 13th of February, 1689.

After the meeting was modelled and prayer ended the paper containing a memorial of our grievances to the Prince of Orange, agreed upon at the last meeting to be drawn up, was presented to the meeting and read, (which because of its length, and the same being to be seen in a paper by itself, I here omit). When it was read, they were enquired at, What they would do with it? who unanimously resolved that the same should be sent with an address to the Prince, with all diligence, and some fit persons chosen to go with the same.—— They appointed Kerfland and Mr. Alexander Shields, to go with the address and grievances, and Dr. Furd or James Wilson to go with them.

The Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties (which was desired by the last meeting to be drawn up) was read at this meeting, who declared their willingness to set about the renewing of the covenants. But that such a great work might be the better gone about, it was judged expedient and fit that copies of the Acknowledgment of Sins, &c. should be written and sent to the Societies, to the end they might see and consider the same more seriously before the renewing of the covenants.

Whereupon some copies were immediately written, and several societies did see the same.—Eight or nine men who were chosen by the meeting, going aside privately, appointed the time and place of the renewing of the Covenants; lest being too public it should be opposed, viz. at *Borland-hill* in the parish of *Lismabagow*, upon the 3d of *March* next.

As the renewing of our covenants is a very great and solemn work, in doing whereof formerly much of the Lord's presence and out-lettings of his Spirit was found and felt by his people; so at this time it was done in as public and solemn a manner as the present circumstances would admit of, and somewhat of the Lord's presence and countenance was experienced by severals there present.—A short account of the management of that work I shall here give:

UPON Saturday, *March 2d*, (the morning was very tempestuous, whereby severals were stopt from coming) Mr. Shields lectured a little upon Deut. xxix. 1. &c. in the Kirk of *Lismabagow*, but it could not contain the people: Wherefore they came out to a place not far from

from the Miltoun, where a tent being set up before, Mr. Shields continued in his lecture, and then preached.— His text was Deut. xxix. 25. *Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, &c.* When sermon was ended, (wherein he shewed the people several of the steps of defection this land was guilty of, and how they had forsaken and broken our covenants, and turned away from following the Lord) he began to read the Acknowledgment of Sins, &c. and continued until night coming on, stopt him.

Upon the morrow, being the Lord's day, *March 3d*, the meeting conveened at Borland-hill, about a mile and an half from the kirk, where was a great multitude of people. Mr. William Boyd preached first upon Jer. 1. 5. Then Mr. Thomas Lining upon — — —.

When Mr. Lining ended his sermon, several persons (whose names were given up before in a paper, and the defections and scandals by themselves they were guilty of, and willing to acknowledge publicly; such as, hearing curates, paying of the Cess, and taking the oath of Abjuration, &c.) as they were called upon by him rose up, and before the congregation they shewed their sorrow and grief for these sins: To whom he had a discourse shewing the heinousness of the same. Likewise some in the same manner manifested their grief for being guilty of extremes on the right hand in going a great length with that impostor John Gib. To whom also Mr. Lining shewed the several aggravations that were in that sin and scandal: Yea, several persons whose names were not given up, rose of their own accord, and acknowledged their being guilty of several steps of defection; and some confessed their being guilty of personal scandals, as theft, &c. And more would have done the like if they had been suffered; but time would not allow thereof.

This being done, Mr. Lining read before the congregation the Acknowledgment of Sins, and Engagement to Duties, and next the Covenants National and Solemn League, which were fairly written at length, with some alterations which the circumstance of the times of necessity called for, such as, when they mention the *King*, in place thereof is put the *Civil Magistrate*. Then after debarring all from holding up their hand, in swearing the covenants, who had not made conscience of mourning before God for all the breaches thereof, and for
all

all their sins and defections, the oath was administered by him, and taken by many in the meeting with hands lifted up.

After this, the Meeting was dismissed. At night, Mr. Shields exercised upon — — —, in the Kirk of Lismahagow, where (after he had done) the covenants were subscribed by several hands*.

Our ministers had laid down resolutions of renewing the covenants in other places of the country than at this place and time above-mentioned; but they got not the same put in practice; for they coming into Edinburgh at the down-sitting of the Convention of Estates, and several occurrences falling in, (of which that time was fertile) a stop was put thereto, and they diverted from setting about that great work.

But to return; the General Meeting that night parted, with a resolution to meet the day following. Accordingly upon the morrow, *February 14th*, they convened again, and concluded upon these things following:

1st, It was concluded that a Letter should be written and sent to Mr. Robert Hamilton, giving him an account of our affairs, and excusing our being so long in writing to him; and also to acquaint him that we would be glad of his company among us, yet not knowing what work he might be called to abroad, which might be for advantage to the cause, we could not desire him positively to come home, but leave it to himself as he thought it his duty.

This Letter was written and sent to Mr. Hamilton; the tenor whereof followeth;

To the honourable Mr. Robert Hamilton.

Crawford-John, February 14th, 1689.

Right Honourable Sir,

WE shall not much apologize for our long forbearance to write to you, but rather take with a fault

* This roll is subscribed only by one minister (Mr. Lining) and the two probationers (Messrs. Shields and Boyd) and twelve as elders, and eighty nine private men; as many were dismissed. These things in the margin in the printed copy are ingrossed into the body of the roll. Mr. Shields in public said, From this day shall be dated either our reformation or de'ormation. — Which of the two followed, must be left with the reader to judge.

fault in the same: However, as we may say, it is not the want of affection to you which hath hindered; so, since the last time we wrote, many reelings and confusions have occurred, and our share thereof hath not been the least, which oftentimes proved diverting from so necessary a duty. We acknowledge indeed, we are many ways obliged to you, and among other things, for laying yourself so much for procuring the ordination of *Mr. Thomas Lining* at *Embsen* now preaching the gospel among us, we hope, with success, to the praise of the riches of free grace. But, as oft-times we are remiss in giving significations of our thanks to them who well deserve the same, especially to you; and when given, they are insignificant; so we hope, though you want this from us, it will not demur you from laying out yourself further in your station for propagating the testimony of Christ, nor make you repent of what you have done already, for which you will not want a reward.

Knowing you will be desirous to know how matters have gone here these few months bygone, we shall briefly relate only some of the most memorable passages which have come to pass in and about this wonderful Revolution, especially those things wherein we are more nearly concerned. To give a full and particular account of all the reelings and overturnings which have been brought about this little while bygone, would so far exceed the bounds of a letter, that it might fill a volume. However, by what is here given, you may see much of the Lord's mercies towards this poor land, in his stately steps of providence. Many, wonderful and strange are the revolutions these few months have produced, whereat we stand astonished, and adore the Lord's holy and infinite sovereignty in his way of working in and among the children of men; the Lord hath put a new song in our mouth, but alas! we cannot sing it. He hath in a way very wonderful, disappointed the fears of his people and hopes of his enemies, when they were ready to spring their mines and accomplish their long intended and wicked enterprizes; behold, on a sudden their designs are crushed, and themselves taken in the pit which they were digging for others, and they were ensnared in the work of their own hands.

In *September* last, some soldiers got secret orders to go through the five western shires and take from the people all their arms; which was obeyed: Whereby the country

country being disarmed, were unfit to defend themselves against the assaults of bloody Papists; but since, they are generally better provided than before.

About this time there were courts of inquisition to be kept in the West, and some of them begun, wherein some professing lairds were to have a hand, in order to the finding out of those who had a hand in rescuing Mr. *Houfston*, and about going to field-meetings; which if they had gone on would have tended much to our bondage. But the news of the coming of the Dutch put a stop to this threatened storm; whereby, and by the soldiers going to England, we got a little respite. In this juncture, when nothing but wars were expected, we thought it duty to deliberate upon what was called for at our hands. Whereupon, after serious deliberation and consideration, we resolved not to ly bye, but to act against the common enemy, yet in a distinct body from others with whom we could not associate.

But when nothing was looked for but wars and confusions, behold, in a way very strange, all turned to rumours of peace. The Lord who is terrible to the kings of the earth and cuts off the spirits of princes, made the tyrant to tumble off his throne and run for it, and his army to desert him; whereby an eminent testimony was given against that absolute power arrogated by that poor mortal man. Likewise there was a testimony given against, and a dash unto Popery, yea more than had been for several years before: Many monuments of idolatry were destroyed, and severals of them burnt in public places, in doing whereof severals of our number were active; the heads, hands and quarters of our martyrs were taken down and buried, and prisoners for truth set at liberty.

When this was going on, there was a report spread through the country of the *Irisbes* being at *Kirkudbright*, and raising fire and sword, which proved so alarming, that in a few days many hundreds were in arms in the west, especially many of our number appeared: But the report proving false, most part of us dismissed. However, a party of us stood together some days in arms, and coming to *Douglas* emitted a declaration (which is here sent) for their own vindication, and to make the intention of their appearance known to the world. After this many of the curates were put from the kirks; so that at this time there are few of them preaching in the west.

west. These things, as they were strange, surprizing and astonishing, and much of the Lord's wisdom, power, mercy and faithfulness to be seen and observed in them; so they call aloud for great fruitfulness and thankfulness at our hands. But alas, our short-coming in this may make us afraid that we provoke the Lord to change his way of dealing with us, and to manifest his anger against us, as he hath of late shown his mercy towards us.

There is one thing, worthy Sir, which oftentimes we know not to determine about, which is, concerning your home-coming.—When we consider how desirable your company would be to many here, and also your own desire to come home, we would gladly comply with it: But again, when we call to mind your usefulness abroad, wherein the Lord hath helped and honoured you above others to lay out yourself for the advantage and comfort of his followers; and not knowing what larger door of access may be opened for you to be useful there, we dare not be positive in our desire to you to come home: so we leave it wholly to yourself to be determined as the Lord shall direct you: heartily wishing that wherever you are the Lord may be with you, leading and guiding, protecting and preserving, comforting and encouraging you. We earnestly desire you would refresh us with a line, giving us an account of the Lord's care of, and kindness to you these months past. We remain,

Your affectionate friends and well-wishers,

Subscribed in the name, and at the desire of our General Meeting, by

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

2dly, It was concluded that Michael Shields and Alexander Waddel should go to Edinburgh to wait upon what news might occur, that if necessity required, upon any special occurrence, they might appoint a General Meeting, and give notice thereof to the Societies.

Monday, *March 4th*, being the day after our covenants were renewed, some men (from every shire where our societies were) having been at the preaching the day before, and staying all night, did this day meet together to consult and deliberate upon what was their du-

ty in this juncture, especially what they would be called to in the time of the convention, which was to sit down in a little time.—An account of what was at this time concluded, with what hath followed thereupon, I shall here impartially give.

The foresaid men being convened, where were also present Messrs. Lining, Shields and Boyd.

It was concluded that 30l. sterl. should be given to the three men who were to go to the prince of Orange with the foresaid address, which sum was presently to be borrowed, and afterward to be collected in the societies and paid again. But the collecting of the same was not to begin, or the intent thereof to be uttered, (lest the discovering of it should mar it) until it be heard the three men were arrived at London.

As it was the desire of the societies (as is evident from the foresaid resolution) to have the address and memorial of grievances to the Prince of Orange dispatched with diligence and expedition, which, if it had been done, would have contributed to the clearing them of some doubts and debates they have fallen into since, seeing thereby opportunity would have been had to have remonstrated and represented our cause and case, and of making an offer of our allegiance upon good terms and conditions to him; and however it had been taken and accepted, we would have known more of his mind and affection toward our cause and ourselves than now we do, at least we would have discharged our duty in that matter: So the same was not laid aside intentionally or out of any evil design, but the very occasion of it was this: When the sending of the address, &c. was concluded on, the persons pitched upon to go with the same, some of them (*viz.* Mr. Shields) could not be wanted till after the renewing of the covenants, and all of them desired not to go until the first day of that solemn work was over; and though they staid till that work was done, yet they were not ready. When the meeting of Estates sat down, at which time our ministers and others coming to Edinburgh, where they staid until after the middle of April, during which time many strange providences occurred, which afforded matter of wonder, talk and work, wherewith they were so much taken up, that the sending of the address and grievances was much neglected, and when the same was minded, they knew not well what to do therein: So that time and season
passing

passing over, the Prince was proclaimed King; after which the doing thereof became doubtful to some, yet others, notwithstanding, were desirous that the same might be set about for the same reasons that moved them at first to agree therewith: But still new things occurring, (which produced matter of new thoughts, resolutions and actions) that business was laid aside.

Upon the foresaid day, It was concluded that ten men shall be sent from the five western shires, *viz.* two from each of them in the name of our societies in that bounds, and that societies in other shires might send also some to Edinburgh, where they were to stay in the time of the sitting of the Convention of Estates, for consulting and deliberating what was to be called for at their hands in emergencies that might fall out: And that they were to appoint General Meetings if necessity required, or rendezvouze in case of imminent danger, and to acquaint friends in the country with the same; as also to subscribe with others in the name of the societies they came from, any papers which might be thought for the advantage of the cause, to be given to the convention of Estates.

The names of the men agreed upon at this time for each shire, are as follow, *viz.* For the societies in the overward of Clidisdale, Patrick Walker; for these in the neitherward, John Muir; in name of these in Renfrew, James Caldwell and William Young; in name of these in the shire of Air, Andrew Ross and David Gemmil; in name of these in Nithsdale, John Mathieson and Robert Wilson; in name of these in Galloway, Earlstoun, or else William Stuart and John Clark; in the name of these in Teviotdale and Eskdale, Ninian Oliphant.

These men above-named were made choice of, with this provision, If the societies did not agree therewith, they might send others more fit.

Although what hath been the result of, and followed upon this resolution hath occasioned much matter of debate and perplexity to the United Societies; yet the thing itself, in its design if it had been rightly managed, might have conduced to the advantage of the cause.— However a brief account of what hath been the result of it, I shall here ingenuously give.

According to the conclusion above-related, the men agreed upon to be sent from the several shires in the name of the societies in each of them, as also our ministers,

came into Edinburgh, the day before the down-sitting of the meeting of the Estates, and many others of the societies came in also; the occasion of which was this: Notice was sent to several places of the country by some persons in Edinburgh, that the malignants intended to do some mischief to the meeting of Estates the first day of their sitting, at least to hinder their meeting; therefore desired all concerned to come in in order to prevent the same.

This coming to the ears of severals in the societies, moved them to come in, lest if they had refused the malignants might have been emboldened to put their wicked projects in execution, and any designing honestly in the meeting of Estates discouraged.

Albeit what was done by them at this time, was, and is condemned by many, because it was a guarding of those men who had been bloody murderers and violent persecutors, (many of such being members of the Convention of Estates) and the same was the first step of our engaging and associating with malignants, and tampering with them, wherein we have gone further on since: Yet it is acknowledged by many, that what they did then was good service to the nation, for if they had not come, the meeting of Estates would not have sitten at that time, and may be not at all; and if so, that which they did in declaring K. James to have forfeited his right to the crown, and abolishing of Prelacy, might not have been done yet.

Some of them did stay a while in the city, being employed in helping to keep guard and cast up trenches against the castle, (which at this time stood out) and others of them staid longer, and kept watch every night in a room of the house where the Earl of Crawford, Lord Cardross, and Sir Patrick Hume of Polwart lodged, to hinder any from assassinating them, which was feared then.

But to return: The men who went to Edinburgh in the name of the Societies (as was related above) did often meet to deliberate what they were called to at this time; what was by them agreed unto (of greatest consequence): I shall here give an account of.

It was proposed by some, that a protestation should be drawn up and given to the Meeting of Estates against their admitting such as constituent members, who were incapable to sit there as being men perjured, who had
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been greatly accessory to, and active in carrying on the late persecution, and shedders of our brethren's blood. This (they said) should be the first thing we should do in reference to the Meeting of Estates.

Against this it was alledged by some, that this was not the time for such a protestation, seeing, though such men ought not to be there, yet to protest against it, might irritate others of the meeting not so guilty, and put a stop to the getting access of any of our papers afterwards: So it was laid aside.

After the Meeting of Estates had concluded upon raising the Fencible-men and the Militia, in case of foreign invasion, or intestine commotions, it was proposed what the Societies up and down the country should do in this case. This being deliberated upon, advice was sent to them to be oft rendezvouzing, and in readiness to appear in case of danger.

At this time fell in debates concerning sinful association (which have been so much tossed since) occasioned by our scrupling to come under the command and conduct of gentlemen (many of whom had been our persecutors not long since) who would be appointed officers over the Fencible-men in the country, not thinking it safe to entrust these to be our leaders: Some of whom having formerly given evidences of their treachery, and enmity against the Lord's cause and people.

It was also proposed by some, that a paper might be drawn up, and given to the Meeting of Estates, containing briefly, some of the material grounds of our disowning the late tyrannical government,—and from a desire to have rightful and lawful government established, humbly to crave, that after they had declared the crown vacant, they might make choice of the Prince of Orange to be King, and devolve the regal authority upon him, with, and upon such conditions and provisions as religion and liberty might be secured; intending hereby, as upon the one hand to get opportunity of shewing our minds freely to the Meeting of Estates (knowing that they intended to make the prince king) what were the conditions, for security of our religion, laws and liberties we desired they should, and ought to seek, and get of him to whom the regal power was to be given: So to evidence to the world, that though we are against tyranny and tyrants, yet we are for magistracy and magistrates when they are duly constituted and appointed: And that

we hate Anarchy equally with tyranny, and are for order and government.

After deliberation concerning this proposal; it was resolved that this paper should be drawn up: which accordingly was done, by way of petition to the Convention of Estates. It was agreed unto and subscribed by most of the Meeting (and several others who were at the time in the town). But some dissented from, and would not condescend unto it, saying, if we owned the prince as such, it behoved not to be by election, seeing he was a stranger, and could not be desired to take our covenants.

However, when it was presented to some of the Meeting of Estates in private, they objected against it as needless, seeing they were about to do what we desired therein: And if it were given in, the mentioning of the covenants, and its strictness would anger the malignant party of the Meeting of Estates, and it might tend to the dividing of them. So it was not given in. Yet several of the members thereof, and others did see it.

About this time it was thought on, and spoken unto among some persons, that in this juncture of affairs, where religion, liberty, country, and all was in great danger, for defending all these, that an offer might be made to the Prince of Orange (whom they expected would be King) of raising a regiment of our friends, and lord Angus to be colonel, upon good conditions, which were to be sought and obtained, before engaging in the service, supposing that both these who would be in the regiment; and these at home, might be in the better capacity to represent our cause, (for adhering to which we had been suffering) and remonstrate our grievances, and seek redress of the same;—but seeing there was no conclusion laid down of prosecuting the business, it was expected the same should not have gone abroad. However it coming to the knowledge of the laird of *Blaickwood*, he made an offer to the Meeting of Estates (after they had resolved upon some regiments of foot, and some troops of horse, in place of the Militia) of raising a regiment of West country men under lord Angus as colonel, and William Cleland as lieutenant colonel. Which was granted, and the regiment was to consist of two battalions, that is twenty companies.

After this offer was made, *Blaickwood* and captain *Cleland* came to Mr. *Shields* and acquainted him with what they had done (who till they told him, knew nothing

thing of it, though some blamed him for having a hand therein) desiring him to acquaint friends in the country thereof, without delay, for they had promised to raise the regiment in fourteen days. Whereupon Mr. Shields shewed this to friends that were at Edinburgh at the time, who meeting together, after some deliberation; it was thought expedient seeing the thing was somewhat extraordinary, that it was requisite a General Meeting of our friends should be appointed, who might deliberately consider what to do therein.

So it was concluded that the meeting should be at *Douglas*, upon the 29th of April next, and the time to be signified to the Societies.

HAVING briefly given an account of the resolutions fallen upon at the meeting which met at *Lismahagow*, the next day after the renewing our covenants, with what hath followed thereupon, I shall next set down the Causes of two Fasts, as they were drawn up at that time by our ministers, to be observed by the Societies.

It is earnestly desired that Thursday, the 14th instant be observed as a day of prayer and supplication, to cry mightily to God, that as he hath put it in our hearts to adventure upon the renewing of our Solemn National Covenants; so he may give us grace to know what we have vowed, and to perform, and walk suitably according to our engagements: And that others differing from us, yet professing and owning the obligation of the covenants, may be stirred up to renew the same also, and join with us in acknowledging the breaches, and engage again unto the duties thereof, that so an union in the Lord, on terms of truth and duty, and returning to him, may be obtained; and the unhappy divisions on the one hand may be composed and cured, and on the other hand, all unholy conspiracy in defection, wronging the testimony of Christ may be prevented: And to beseech the Lord that he would so over-rule the present changes of providence, and particularly the business of this great convention of Estates, that the covenanted reformation may be revived, and re-established, the government of the state be set upon a righteous foundation, relieving us of the fears of tyranny: and the government of the church restored according to the Lord's institution, delivering us from the yoke of prelacy, and

supre-

supremacy, and all encroaching usurpations, novations, or men's inventions.

It is also earnestly desired that the first day of May, be kept as a day of prayer and supplication, that the Lord may break the combinations, contrivances, and plots of the popish, prelatical, and malignant faction, against the work and people of God, deliver us from their rage, and particularly rescue and save our distressed brethren in Ireland from their devouring sword.

THE interval betwixt the last General Meeting and this, was productive of wonders, which as they were strange, so they had different effects upon persons, according as they were affected, or disaffected to the same: Amongst other things these are very observable.

1st, That any of the Societies (who not long since were killed all day long, and counted as sheep for the slaughter) should not only get liberty, but be invited to appear in arms in the chief city of the kingdom as many of them did, at the downsitting of the Convention of Estates. But some did not approve thereof.

2^{dly}, A few months ago Prelacy was arrived at the greatest height of arrogancy and pride: Behold it thrown down from the top of its grandeur, even by these who had formerly contributed to the setting, and keeping it up: It was not only wearied of, and hated by the generality of people, as a burden and yoke they could not endure, which was manifested by the concurrence of many, to thrust out these intruding hirelings the Curates from the kirks: But also it was abolished (or laid aside) by an act of the supreme judicatory of the nation, as a grievance to the state.

3^{dly}, This is also remarkable that the Meeting of Estates having by an act declared K. James to have forfeited his right to the crown, gave the same reasons for it, that the United Societies formerly had given, and for which they protested against his instalment: And tho' for this, they were much condemned, reproached, and persecuted; yet they are justified and vindicated in this matter, by this act of these men; most part of whom, not only owned K. James's authority, but condemned these who disowned it, as guilty of death. But altho' these things are much to be observed with thankfulness and acknowledged with praise, in bringing of which to
pass

pass, the Lord's hand was eminently seen: Yet there were other things which did a little embitter or counter-balance them. For at that time there were great fears of an invasion from Ireland, by K. James and his bloody throat cutters, the Irishes,—and also of intestine insurrections to be raised by bloody Claverhouse (who had left the Meeting of Estates) and other malignants, papists, and enemies to God, and their country: Upon account of which the Meeting of Estates resolved upon raising some regiments of foot (as is related before) and an offer having been made of raising a regiment of West countrymen, particularly by the laird of Blaickwood, the offer was accepted, and a commission granted to raise the same, which was to consist of twenty companies of these men who had been formerly persecuted.

After some of our friends, who continued in Edinburgh, were acquainted with this, they appointed a General Meeting to meet at *Douglas* upon the 29th of April, to consider upon this affair.—Which accordingly did convene.

Upon the 28th day of April, being the Lord's day, there was a field-meeting beside the town, where was a great multitude of people, to whom Messrs Lining, Boyd, and Shields preached.

UPON April 29th, the General Meeting did convene in the kirk of *Douglas*.—After the same was modelled,

This question was enquired at them, *viz.* Whether in this juncture, when there were great fears of an invasion from Ireland, and of intestine wars in the land, it were a necessary duty to raise a regiment of our friends, for defence of religion, the country, and ourselves.

After some discourse upon this, every one assented to this, that the country was like to be in great danger, and that it was very expedient to have men modelled.

But some said that to have a regiment of our friends under pay, would be a sinful association, seeing there were in the army, many malignants, men of blood, and murderers of our brethren, with whom our officers behoved to sit in councils of war, and to fight all under one general, *viz.* M·Kay, whom they knew not, nor what he was for, or against: also against him there were some objections.

To this it was answered, that it would not be a sinful association, but only necessitous, and discretive, which

the danger of time called for at their hands, they being as much, if not more, than any others, called to defend religion, and their country, and though there were wicked men in the council of war, yet our officers having right to be there as well as others, might further good designs, and hinder evil; and if they could not get that done, yet they had liberty to protest.

After some jangling debates it was at length resolved to put this question to a vote, and every one's mind particularly enquired, *viz.* Whether or not at this time it was a sinful association for one regiment to be in an army, while there were many officers malignant and bloody men, and all under one general? The most part of the votes went in the affirmative, that it was a sinful association. Before the votes were fully gotten, but especially when the same was done, there was great confusion in the Meeting: To compose which, there was a paper presented and read, containing some proposals to the lieutenant colonel, which when they had heard quieted them a little*.

The sum of the paper was as follows.

To the Right Honourable the Lieutenant Colonel, and the rest of the superior Officers of the Earl of Angus's Regiment.—The humble Proposals of some Honest People in the Western Shires, To whom it is offered to take on in, and make up that Regiment.

WE cannot acquit ourselves in the duties we owe to God, to our country, to our brethren, and to our posterity; as we are obliged by the laws of God, of man, and by our national covenant, if we do not offer

* It is here to be observed that their ministers were among the chief drivers of this affair, and what they could not do by preaching and arguing, they now endeavour to effect by subtilty; they had endeavoured the day before vigorously to excite them to it, and especially Mr. Shields, who at that time, preached several days upon Judges v. 23. *Curse ye Meroz;—because they came not to the help of the Lord,—against the mighty.* Crying out, “Come, let us go and pull down the gates of Rome”. And he being in greater respect with many, upon the account of his former zeal and faithfulness, had greater influence to induce many to engage, who afterward, to their dying day repented thereof: (as he himself relates in his Journals,) when they were in Flanders, some of them cursed him to his face, for the hurt he had in inducing them to the Service.

fer our concurrence, in the present call of providence, to assist in the defence of the common cause against the common enemies.—But fearing the snares and hazard of the sin and punishment of unlawful associations with those who have demeaned themselves as enemies to the cause of God, and that same interest they are now professing to espouse: And we resolving through grace to adhere to that same cause in fighting, as we have done in suffering. And not to forget or forgo our testimony against the wrongs it hath received from any hand. We humbly desire to be satisfied in these proposals, ere we can engage under your conduct.

First, That all our officers superior and inferior be such as we can in conscience and prudence confidently submit unto, and follow. Such as have not served the enemy, nor persecuted and opposed the cause, nor engaged by the Declaration, Test, or other sinful oaths and bonds to oppose and suppress the cause we fight for: But have given proof of their fidelity, integrity, and good affection to the Covenanted Reformation, and are willing to renew the covenant engagement, when duly, and seasonably called thereunto.

Secondly, Or at least if such a number of officers cannot be found, that are free of such offences, that such as are admitted who are chargeable with lesser degrees of foresaid offences, and compliances, make public acknowledgment on the head of the regiment, of their sense of these sins and scandals, and engage to submit to the censures of the church.

Thirdly, That these officers, so qualified, may not take up nor bring in men, any that will take on of their own choice, or by appointment of the general officers, at this levy: But that at the first rendezvous, the companies that we shall complete may have captains, and inferior officers set over them such as they shall choose or consent to and approve.

Fourthly, That the officers we have already chosen be either continued in their places if capable, or admitted to such places as they are capable of, and none obtruded on us, as incapable and unfit, without our consent.

Fifthly, That particularly, it may be granted us, to choose the laird of *Carloups*, and the laird of *Kerstrand*, or *Earlstoun* be admitted for aid-major.

Sixthly, That while in the country, we may have liberty to choose our own ministers, and if we should be

called out of the country, that we may have the choice of one to go with us.

Seventhly, That we be not obliged to go out of the three dominions, nor out of Scotland except upon urgent necessity of present service.

Eighthly, That we may have liberty to represent and remonstrate our grievances sustained these years bygone and impeach according to law and justice the chief instruments and abettors thereof, in church, state, army, or country.

After reading of this paper, some of the Meeting said if these proposals were granted they could not say much against the raising of a regiment.

UPON the morrow April 30th, the General Meeting convened again in the Kirk, to whom were read again the proposal above written; when it was resolved by them that the lieutenant colonel should come in, that after hearing of it, they might know what he would say to it: which accordingly he did; and after hearing of it, he answered that there were some of them not in his power to grant, but belonged to the King, and Meeting of Estates. And some were in his power, as these relating to the putting in of officers in the regiment, and said he would put none in against whom we had just exceptions.

But he going out again, and the Meeting not getting satisfaction for granting of their proposals. They fell again into confusions, and divisions, some being for raising of the regiment presently, upon good conditions, others requiring time to consider and advise with their Societies, seeing the business was of no small importance. To this it was answered, though time to deliberate thereon was to be desired, yet in this case it could not be allowed, seeing they knew not how soon the land might be invaded by the bloody Irishes; and before that, it were necessary that the regiment were taught the discipline of war.

About this time some came into the kirk, and told that news was come to the castle, that the Irishes were landed, and the Highlanders were in arms. This, as some supposed at the time, was not true (as afterward it proved) but only was made use of to stir up the people the more to engage in the regiment.

After-

Afterward all the companies in the town were desired to go to the Holm beside the water, and to draw up before Mr. Buntine the general muster-master, that he might report that he saw them in arms, and they should not be thereby any further engaged.

Some were for the companies drawing up, and others were against it. As some of the companies were going to the Holm, one went and dissuaded them therefrom, saying, If they went they would be engaged in the regiment.—For this he was blamed by some, seeing thereby the lieutenant colonel and others did lose much of their pay, which they would have got if they had mustered.

For composing and settling differences, much pains were used. Some desired proposals should be sent to General Mackay; and to avoid division for the future upon this account, that some were for engaging in the regiment and some not, this proposal was made by some, That these who had not clearness to engage, might forbear, and say nothing against them who had; and these who had freedom, might go on, and say nothing against these who wanted it.

May 1st, in the morning some persons convened, and drew up proposals to be sent to Mackay, which were to be presented to the General Meeting, who met within a little, to whom the proposals were read. They objected against some of them; so the same were corrected, and desired to be sent immediately to Mackay, and his answer to be returned to them against the next General Meeting, which was appointed to meet at Douglas,
May 13th.

This paper of proposals by way of humble petition to Mackay was shewed to the lieutenant colonel; but as he did not agree with the manner of sending it, he drew up an address to Mackay in the name of the regiment;—which some was against, in regard the meeting had concluded upon the other, and knew nothing of this, which differed much from the first.

The person who undertook to deliver the papers to Mackay, coming into Edinburgh for that end, found him gone to the north; so it was not given. However a new draught of the address was written by Blakewood, who desired the same might be smooth, in regard all we were to seek of him was only the signifying his assent, and agreeing with the work of reformation. But some of these desired to present it, were altogether against this alteration,

teration, because they had no allowance for any such thing from those who desired them to come; Yet the same was presented to Col. Balfour, commander in chief for the time.

IN the interval betwixt the last meeting and this (which was the sooner appointed, that the affair concerning the regiment might be hastened) the captains were raising the companies, which were brought up to a field-meeting upon the Lord's day, *May 12th*, where was a great multitude of people. Mr. Shields preached upon Judges v. 23.

UPON the morrow, the General Meeting convened at *Douglas*,—There were presented to, and read at this meeting two papers; the one was some proposals of the soldiers desirous to serve in the regiment, to the lieutenant colonel and other officers; the other was a declaration to be subscribed by all the officers and soldiers at their engaging in the regiment. True copies of both these papers follow.

*To the Right Honourable the Lieutenant Colonel, and other officers in the Earl of ANGUS's Regiment—
The humble Petition of the Soldiers that desire to serve in the said Regiment.*

OUR conscience, in the fear and zeal of God, moving us to undertake this service without any selfish or sinister motive or end, presseth us humbly to propose and lay before your Honours the terms which will engage and encourage us to come with confidence under your conduct. And therefore we most earnestly desire you will be pleased to consider them, and consent to, and concert them with us by way of contract, which may contain what we desire of your Honours, and what you are pleased to demand of us for mutual satisfaction.

Our desires are these following.

1st, That all officers and soldiers of the regiment, in some subscribed declaration, like this herewith delivered, make profession of their soundness in religion, sincerity in the cause truly stated, and of their unanimous harmony in the received and approved principles of the church

church of Scotland, owning and adhering to the covenants and work of reformation, in its doctrine, worship, discipline and government, against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, tyranny and arbitrary government; and that none be listed or kept in the regiment, but those who subscribe the same, when agreed upon.

2dly, That all officers and soldiers may concur in all lawful and expedient endeavours in advancing the reformation of the church and state, especially for establishing the church in its former order and union, according to the word of God and former approved constitutions of this church; and prosecuting every reasonable and suitable testimony for prosecuting the same, or against any corruption introduced, or that may be introduced, inconsistent therewith or impeditave thereof.

3dly, That we may not only have liberty to represent our grievances sustained these years bygone under the late tyranny, and impeach, according to course of law, the instruments and abettors of the same in church, state, army or country. But especially that our superior officers concur, and bear hand to the pleading out of the army such notorious criminals as have oppressed and persecuted us, murdered our brethren, and have been enemies to the cause we now fight for.

4thly, While that is not done, and until it be done, we desire to be as remote from the snares of conjunction with them, as may consist with the effectual management of the war. And to this effect, that our officers endeavour to provide and procure, that we go not out in promiscuous detachments with them, nor be mixed in encampments with the foresaid criminals.

5thly, That our officers be always of our own choice, or approbation; and that none be obtruded upon us without our consent; and these already commissioned or now to be commissioned, be continued, until either by death taken away, or for some fault they deserve degradation, or be found, after a competent time to fit themselves, incapable of that trust.

6thly, That as soon as peace is settled, and fears of rebellion or invasion ceased, such as have a mind to go off, may have liberty; and their vacancies supplied with the approbation of the rest.

7thly, That we may have the privilege of a minister chosen by all of us, and an elder in every company, with
the

the respect and esteem due to persons of their character, who may with authority reprove offences, without respect of persons.

8thly, That for promoting piety in the regiment, it be not only permitted, but appointed that the guards may perform the worship of God publicly, at least such parts of it, and at such times as their military duties will allow : And these that are off guard, may concur in family worship ordinarily ; and some day or other, every week also, to meet in competent numbers with their elders for fellowship in prayer and Christian conference, (besides the ministers exercise for preaching and catechising) as conveniency will allow.

9thly, That among the military laws for restraining disorders, there may be severe sanctions and punishments assigned for fornication and all uncleanness, and all lascivious, filthy and unchristian talking, swearing, cursing, mocking of godliness, drinking of healths, and all drunkenness, &c.

The tenor of the Declaration follows.

WE all, and every one of us, officers and soldiers of every degree, belonging to the regiment of James, Lord Angus, under-subscribing ; who now offer ourselves with all resolution and readiness of mind to the service of the king and state, in defence of religion and the liberties of our country, against the intestine insurrections and foreign invasions of the Popish, Prælati- cal and malignant faction ; Considering what a promiscuous association of men of diverse principles and professions are employed and intrusted in the present service, and how variously they may propose to themselves the state of the cause, and the end of the expedition ; and considering how many demur and hesitate to concur in the present appearance, fearing the snare and hazard and punishment of unlawful associations with these that have heretofore demeaned themselves as enemies to the cause of God ; for their satisfaction and our own exoner- ation, Do declare, we mean no manner of way to espouse any malignant party, quarrel nor interest, nor fight for any other cause, nor upon any other grounds, than what this church and kingdom hath owned in the best and purest times of reformation, and what the faith-
ful

ful have contended for through all the troubles of the late tyranny. To wit, not only for the preservation of the rights of the state and liberties of the kingdom, with the defence and preservation of our dread Sovereign, King William, his person and authority, in the defence and preservation of the true religion, liberties and laws of the kingdom: To whom, as a comfortable instrument of God's mercy, we owe the present reviving in our bondage: Upon whom, in a great measure, doth depend the quiet and continuance thereof; and with whom the stability and security of our religion and liberties is so straitly conjoined: But also for the good old way of Scotland's covenanted reformation, in its formerly established, approved, and received principles, confessions and constitutions of doctrine, worship, discipline and government, according to the word of God and solemn national covenants, which we own and avouch to be of binding force and unrepealable obligation, and declare our willingness and desire to renew the same, whenever lawfully, duly, and seasonably called thereto; and against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, tyranny and arbitrary government, and all persons or things opposite to the glory of God, the honour of the king, safety and liberty of the church or state: Particularly against all the attempts of the late James the VII. and his accomplices within or without the land, for re-inforcing his usurpations by rebellious armies.

Moreover, as for association with the enemies of the foresaid cause of God, of truth, and of godliness, whether for or against it; we abhor and detest every such confederacy, or entering into affinity with the people of these abominations; and shall concur with, and adhere unto the former approved testimony of this church, against the admitting unto, or keeping in places of power and trust, any Popish or malignant incendiaries or evil instruments, for the defence of the cause or nation, who have been the professed and sworn tools of the destruction thereof; But whether they shall intrude themselves into this service or not, yet we shall not be hindered from contributing our utmost to oppose all the enemies of the cause of God and the country in the present juncture. And in the mean time, shall endeavour that none be embodied to our regiment that have not given proof of their fidelity, integrity and good affection to the fore-

said cause, or of their remorse for their defects therein †.

These two papers were drawn up in the interval between this meeting and the last, intending to have good conditions; and that their way might be further cleared who engaged in the regiment; the same containing nothing but what they judged necessary, both to seek, and also to have, before they engaged.

When the meeting had heard these papers, It was concluded by them that they should both be shewed to the lieutenant colonel, and also to Sir Patrick Hume of Polwart, who was come from Edinburgh. Upon this account, and for this effect, they chose Messrs. Shields and Boyd, Wm. Stuart, Jo. Mathieson, Wm. Young, Jo. Clark, James Wilson and Michael Shields, who went immediately to these gentlemen, (who were then come to the town) together with Blakewood.

When Polwart had read the papers, he said, He had nothing to object against them; yet the same could not be agreed upon and done by way of contract betwixt officers and soldiers, lest thereby they might come under the hazard of a council of war; for, according to military discipline it would not be suffered, and that no private leagues among subjects were to be made.

After the lieutenant colonel had read the two papers, he said, He would never go into any such transaction, or come under such engagements, (agreeing with the objections made by Polwart). At length, after some debates, Polwart drew up a paper containing a short declaration of the designs of engaging in the service, with which the lieutenant col. agreed.

The persons above-named, returning to the meeting, gave them a brief account of what had past betwixt the gentlemen and them, with which the meeting was not satisfied, seeing their proposals and desires were not granted; and many, when they saw it so, were more averse from engaging in the regiment.

However, after some discourse and debating concerning what was their duty in such a case, it was concluded that

• It appears that these papers were wrote by Mr. Alexander Shields, and although many jud. ed much of the matter of them contrary to the actings at this time, yet many others were much induced thereby to engage, chiefly thro' their implicit faith in Mr. Shield's honesty.

that a paper should be drawn up, containing in short what they were for and what they were against, to be read to-morrow at the head of every company. This was thought necessary, lest the testimony (for owning of which they had been suffering) might be wronged, or kept in silence by their present resolutions and actings. —And for that night they parted.

At night there were two papers drawn up, one in the name of the officers, and another in the name of the soldiers.

Howbeit they were not read as was designed, the reason of which shall be immediately given.

May 14th, The lieutenant colonel and the laird of Blakewood in the morning came from the castle to the town, and acquainted our ministers and others, That some officers having met in a council of war, had resolved not to treat any more with us. He likewise made some reflections on some of the captains, that he had been slighted and disobeyed by them.—So these gentlemen returned again to the castle, and presently the laird of Polwart took journey for Edinburgh, whom the lieutenant Col. conveyed a little way off.

But before he did this he was desired to come and speak with the companies, who were then all drawn up in the Holm. Whereupon the lieutenant Col. coming to the place in order to speak to them ; he came first to Capt. Haddow's company, and had a short speech to them to this purpose : That he had lost himself by failing in his promise to raise a regiment ; but since it was so, he would do it with honour : That he had been slighted, &c. and that he had met with some of our friends the day before concerning our engaging, to whom he had offered reasonable terms, and had drawn up a paper shewing their designs of entering into the same.—Whereupon capt. John Campbel of Moy (who was with him) read the same.—This paper is mentioned above, and was drawn up by Polwart ; The tenor whereof followeth :

“ TO declare that you engage in this service, of purpose to resist Popery, and Prelacy, and arbitrary power ; and to recover and establish the work of reformation in Scotland, in opposition to Popery, Prelacy and arbitrary power in all the branches and steps thereof, till the government

vernment in church and state, be brought to that lustre and integrity which it had in the best times."

This being read, Mr. Shields explained it a little, having a speech to the company to this purpose, That they were for maintaining and defending the work of reformation and our covenants, and that they were against association with malignants and enemies to truth and godliness; and that they would help to bring these guilty of our brethren's blood to condign punishment.

In this manner the lieutenant colonel went through the whole companies, from one to another, (being all the time on horse-back) having to each of them the like speech, as is above written, and capt. Campbel reading the above paper, as also Mr. Shields explaining the same to the same purpose, as is above set down. After this was done, the companies staid a little in the Holm. But the lieutenant colonel with the captains and some lieutenants, with our ministers, went into the town, where they communed together concerning the present business.—And afterward he gave orders to each captain where to march with his company, which was accordingly obeyed.

To this account I shall add this one thing, *viz.* That there were some objections made against some captains which the lieutenant Colonel choosed, especially against Captain Monro, yet they were made officers in the regiment.

Thus was Lord Angus's regiment raised and managed. As some were not well pleased that there was any engaging or taking on therein, before security was obtained for performing the conditions required, but instead thereof rather a passing from them, and an yielding too far: So since that time they have been the occasion of much talk, some despising, and some others commending them. Again they have been condemned by some, as being in a sinful association with malignants. But many of the malignants themselves, especially some in the army, have accounted them as one of their great eyesores.

Towards evening, after the affair was past, the most part of the meeting convened again, when it was proposed to them, What was next called for at their hands? To which some answered, They thought it necessary that an offer should be made of raising another regiment
of

of our friends, upon good terms and conditions. Whereupon it was concluded that this offer should be made; for effectuating of which William Stewart, Dr. Furd, James Wilson, and Michael Shields were desired to go to Edinburgh, to speak to some persons concerning the same: Who accordingly went and spoke to Sir Patrick Hume of Polwart. He told them that he, and also some others of the Meeting of Estates wished that another regiment of these people were raised, but he thought the same would not be obtained at the time, both on account of the want of money, and also if such a thing were mentioned in the Meeting of Estates, severals of them would oppose it, who had no kindness for these people. So this was desisted from.

TROUBLES and commotions were not few in the land, since the last meeting, and more daily expected, both at home, and also from abroad: As Claverhouse and others, were raising all the force they could, in the Highlands: And in the Lowlands, papists and malignants were busy, in plotting and secretly carrying on their wicked designs: So an invasion from Ireland was still feared, the fears of which, made the most part of the sensible-men in the Western shires, to choose officers, and often to muster, that they might be the better capacitated to defend themselves. As for the Society people, many of them were engaged in Angus's regiment, and these at home, were frequently rendezvousing under their own officers. But one thing was sad, and matter of lamentation, *viz.* The confusions and debates that begun to arise, and increasing amongst them concerning the regiment, with whose engaging so abruptly, without getting the conditions (sought,) granted. Many were dissatisfied, and did say they were in a sinful association with malignants, which also, severals in the regiment themselves complained of, and feared. As it was a burden to them, that there were some scandalous officers in that regiment, who were put in by the lieutenant colonel: So to shew their dislike at employing and entrusting wicked men in the army,—The soldiers emitted a Declaration, upon the —— day of July, as they were marching from Dumblain and Down, in their way to the Highlands.

At this time the parliament was sitting at Edinburgh, having convened upon the 17th day of June.

IN the mean time a General Meeting did convene at *Carntable* upon the 18th of July 1689.—After the Meeting was modelled and prayer ended.—It was enquired what they thought most expedient to begin with. Some answered that there were two men come from the regiment. These men were sent from the regiment, to keep up and entertain correspondence with the rest of their friends at this Meeting, and to know what was concluded by them. Whereupon they were desired to speak. Who said that it was the desire of those who sent them to keep up correspondence with their brethren in the country, as formerly. But they were jealous that some in the Meeting had exceptions against the regiment, and they desired to know the same. To this some answered that they were afraid that they were in a sinful association. It was said by others, that this had been debated before, and at this time they could not put an end to it, therefore it was safest to forbear.

However the soldiers had signified their mind concerning the same, and other things in a declaration lately emitted by them, which was shown to the Meeting, and read †.

The Meeting having heard this paper were well satisfied, and shewed their desire and willingness to keep up correspondence with the regiment.

They likewise shewed that it was the desire of the regiment, that they should keep up their rendezvous frequently, and that it would be for the security of the West country, to have the regiment among them; which to get effected, they desired the same might be represented to the parliament, as at this time there were great fears of the Irishes landing in the West country, in case of which both these in the country, and the regiment might have the better access to the helping one another.

The Meeting did take this in good part, and wished that the regiment were in the West, and that a fit way were fallen upon to represent the expediency of the same
to

† This Declaration is not only the same in substance, but in the same words, with the Declaration shown to the lieutenant colonel at their entry into the regiment, a copy of which is already inserted in page 400, therefore unnecessary to repeat; and whether their emitting it now, or their shewing it as their desire to the lieutenant colonel before, could free them of being in a sinful association, must be left with the reader to judge.

to the parliament. Though this was their desire, yet the same took no effect, being never put to the trial; one cause whereof was, the want of hopes of its having success. But as to the rendezvousing which they advised unto, the same was very frequent through the West country; concerning which, this is not to be forgotten, but deserves a remark: That in several places the country people who were rendezvousing, did refuse these men for officers, who were malignants, and had been persecutors, notwithstanding of their being chosen to be such, by the committee of the shires: And made choice of such as they had no exception against: Thinking it highly irrational, and very unsafe to come under the command and conduct of these men whom they had ground to expect (as was said of some of them) would betray them to K. James, when he came over, severals of them having sworn allegiance to him formerly. This afforded matter of much talking, and made many to enquire and search into the question about association.

Upon the consideration that there had been much precious blood of the Lord's people shed in this land in the time of the late persecution. And now a door being opened in holy providence whereby access was given, and and some hopes of getting justice executed upon the murderers. It was proposed to the Meeting that they should deliberate upon what was their duty in such a case.

After speaking to this a little, they concluded it was their duty to duty to seek, and cry for justice upon the murders of their brethren, and that the parliament should be petitioned for the same.

Whereupon James Wilson and Michael Shields, was desired to go to Edinburgh, to seek advice from some there, what would be the fittest method for effectuating thereof. But in the mean time our friends up and down the country, were desired to have in readiness the evidence for probation of the murderers; seeing the same would be instantly called for, whenever the murderers came to be tried.

Agreeable to this conclusion, was the desire of the soldiers in lord Angus's regiment, who before they marched to the Highlands drew up a petition to the parliament (to be given in when it should meet) wherein among other things they crave injustice upon the murderers

ers of their brethren; and in particular upon some at that time in prison, which petition was read to the Meeting.

A short compend of which followeth †.

To the Right Honourable, the Estates of Parliament of the Kingdom of Scotland,—The Humble Address of the Soldiers of the Regiment of James lord Angus.

SHEWETH,

THAT as our sufferings under, and for declining the yoke of the late popish arbitrary usurpation are not unknown to your Honours, and we hope will not now be condemned, when these mischiefs framed into a law, which occasioned them, are abolished. So our actions since the beginning of his Majesty's undertaking to redeem these nations from popery and slavery, have as evidently demonstrated our inclinations to loyalty, as our sufferings before shewed our aversion to tyranny. Having confidence in humility to say we were the first in the nation that publicly prayed for, and avouched a readiness to concur with his Illustrious Highness, before, at, and since his arrival: We were the first that declared a desire to engage for him, and under him, at our renewing of our Solemn Covenants. We were the first that offered our service for the defence of the Meeting of Estates,—and we were the first that offered to be levied into a modelled regiment,—yea though we had (and continue to have) many discouraging fears of snares, and sinful involvements in association with the enemies of truth and godliness, who have been, and yet are encouraged, employed, and intrusted for the defence of that cause, which within this short time they professedly opposed, and by many dreadful oaths, are engaged to suppress,—against which associations we cannot forbear to bear witness.—Yet we reckoned we could not acquit ourselves in the duties we owe to our God, to our country, to our king, to our posterity,
and

† As Mr. Shields was minister to the regiment, and went, and continued for most part with them; So all their public papers now behoved to come through that channel: And as it was one of the arguments he used for engaging in the regiment: That they would be in a better capacity to prosecute, and bring to justice the murderers of their brethren; so the event shewed how far he was mistaken in his politicks.

and to ourselves,—if we should not appear for such a cause, as the recovery and preservation of our Covenant-ed Reformation, laws and liberties.

Wherefore as we have engaged, so we resolve, thro' grace, to continue venturing our dearest blood for this cause,—so far as we can with a good conscience, which as it was the only principle that prompted us to undertake this service; so it is that which moves us now to take the boldness to unbowel our hearts before your Honours, as many reproaches are cast upon us, that we are enemies to government, and will not fight for it, and that we are disorderly persons, not fit to be trusted, which is the language of these, who though they deserve no trust yet they desire it, not only to satisfy their ambition, but to ruin us who have hitherto escaped their fury: From whose reproaches we could easily have vindicated ourselves, if partly, the conscience of our innocence had not persuaded us to patience, and partly our officers refusing to concert with us, or have any hand in emitting any paper in the name of the regiment, lest it should be interpreted a seditious motion, beyond the bounds of military order, had not dissuaded us. But now being to march to the Highlands, farther from all access to your Honours, and nearer the enemy, with whom we look for daily conflicts, none of us knowing who may first enter into eternity.

Our conscience in the zeal of God presseth us, in all humility and earnestness,—in the first place we request that we, and our brethren in the country be admitted to represent our grievances sustained these years bygone under the late tyranny, and impeach according to course of law and justice, the instruments and executioners of that bloody cruelty exercised on us and our brethren, especially such notorious criminals as have without, and against all colour of law without any trial or sentence, murdered many honest and innocent persons, whose blood cries for vengeance, and he to whom it belongs craves it of your Honours to execute it; as being the only way revealed in his word, whereby the land may be cleansed from the blood shed therein.

Particularly we crave liberty to impeach those already incarcerate, viz. ——— Murray, ——— Livingston, and ——— Creighton, whom we offer to convict of horrid murder, and shedding the blood of war in peace, without, and against all law, as also ——— Balfour,

and ——— Nisbet, who are let out upon bail, whom in like sort, we offer to prove guilty of the like crimes.

Next as we presume to supplicate that the church be purged of Episcopal Curates, that were intruded by the Prelate's collation, and Patron's presentation, contrary to the institution of Christ Jesus, the only King and Head of his church, contrary to the institutions of this church, without the call, and contrary to the inclinations of the people, being the bane of the nation, the scandal of the church, and the source of all our sorrows: So we petition that none be admitted to, nor continued in power and trust, in the state, army, or country, who have been instruments of the persecution, and professed and sworn tools of the late tyranny: Whereby, as your honours will be far from all fears of the like treasons, and treacheries discovered already in some of these fore-mentioned in the army; so all honest men will be exceedingly encouraged and engaged to be zealous and resolute in your service.

Finally, We humbly supplicate your Honours, that military laws for restraining the army from disorders, be ordered to be put in execution effectually against all debaucheries, that affront the Most High God, and provoke his indignation against the army, particularly, fornication, drunkenness swearing, cursing, &c. without respect to persons of officers or soldiers.

These things we beseech your Honours to grant, and your supplicants shall pray, &c.

According to the desire (of the Meeting) before mentioned, the two men appointed by them having gone to Edinburgh, took with them the petition of the soldiers of the regiment, that it might be given in to the Parliament. But having shewed it to some there, to get their advice concerning the giving of it in; they dissuaded them from doing it at the time, in regard that if such a paper were given by the soldiers, it would be accounted mutinous, which would hinder the Parliament from taking heed to the same, yea it might give occasion to disband the whole regiment: But though the same were fit to be presented, yet it would not at the time be noticed by the Parliament.— Upon which consideration, any further procedure in that matter was laid aside.

To return; At this Meeting a fast day was agreed upon to be observed by the Societies.—The causes follow.

It is earnestly desired that the 15th day of August be kept as a day of fasting and humiliation before the Lord; for the insensibleness that hath possessed the spirits of all ranks, so that we are not rightly affected with the Lord's dispensations, either of judgment or mercy, and also, we would be earnest with the Lord; for light and direction how to carry so as to be kept free from the right hand, and left hand extremes.

The next Meeting was concluded upon to be at *Douglas*, the last Wednesday of September, yet in consideration that in this interval some providences might occur, which would require the Meeting to be anticipated, it was concluded that one man from each shire where our Societies were, should meet at *Frierminion*, the first Wednesday of August, for mutual consultation concerning emergents which might come to pass,—or might appoint the General Meeting sooner.

ACCORDING to the foresaid conclusion: Upon the 7th of August at *Frierminion*, some persons from several shires did convene.

The most material thing deliberate upon by them, was, that albeit the representing of our grievances to the King, while he was Prince of Orange had hitherto been delayed, whereby debates had been occasioned among ourselves, yet it might be considered whether it were now necessary to send the same.—They all agreed that it was necessary and expedient to give a true representation of our cause and case to the King, and seek redress of our grievances, though this had been long delayed, and had formerly been agreed upon by the General Meeting at *Crawford-John*, February 13th last past.

Whereby it was concluded that an address with a memorial of our grievances, should be sent to the Prince of Orange; which memorial might now be written over again, and sent, with such alterations, as the present circumstances called for. And they concluded that *Earlston*, *Keriland*, and *Sir Robert Hamilton*, and *Mr Alexander Shields* should be desired to go to London with the same, or any two of them, (*Mr. Shields* still being one of them) as they agree among themselves. As also, it was agreed, that thirty pounds sterling, should be given to them who went, for bearing their expences, which

was to be sent to Edinburgh, soon after this Meeting.

When this conclusion was fallen upon, Kerland and Mr. Shields were with lord Angus's regiment, who being acquainted therewith, they both came presently to Edinburgh, where at the time were Earlstoun and Sir Robert Hamilton.—Whereupon Kerland, and Mr. Shields, having met with Sir Robert Hamilton in order to confer together concerning that business, the result of which conference was; Kerland refused to go at the time, in regard he could not get the regiment left. Sir Robert signified his mind to this purpose. That tho' he was ready to be at the pains, and willing to adventure himself with an address to the Prince of Orange, providing it were rightly drawn up, in doing whereof he expected they and he would not agree, but he refused (and in this he said Earlstoun was of the same mind) to go with that paper which was already written, in regard that he had no commission, nor instructions from the General Meeting concerning the same: Which, if called for, and wanting, he might be reckoned a cheat. And moreover, as for him they were to go unto, he could not address, nor own him as King, but only as Prince of Orange, but he said he was willing to hazard himself in representing our grievances to him as such, with an offer of our allegiance upon right terms, acknowledging we had been too hasty in owning him before. Neither would he go with Kerland and Mr. Shields, who were of a contrary mind in this matter, seeing they might, when there, contradict one another in their discourses.

Mr. Shields declared his willingness to go, if these desired would go with him, but for the reasons above given by each of them a stop was put to that affair.

Not long after the last General Meeting, in a rencounter at Dunrory, in Athol, Claverhouse a grand enemy to the country was killed, whereby the fears of his doing more mischief was removed, and one great prop which supported the malignants hope was cut off. However the loss of the forces which were against him was very great, for which M^cKay who commanded them, was much blamed for his bad conduct.

After Claverhouse's death, one Cannon, commanded the Irishes, and Highland army, who were then increased,
many

many being encouraged to join them by the spoils gotten at the late engagement. They pillaged much of the country in and about Angus. Mackay, with several troops of English and Scotch horse and dragoons, went against them, but his motion toward them was very slow. In the mean time, when he and his troops were in the north, Cannon with his whole army, consisting of 5000 men, or thereby, came to Dunkel, where lord Angus's regiment was posted, being ordered to that place, as was thought and said by many, of design to be cut off †; but the Lord disappointed the hopes and expectations of their enemies, and the fears (that were not groundless) of the regiment themselves. Though Cannon's men did assault them very briskly, yet they were repulsed, and made to retire with loss. This conflict gave occasion to much talk and discourse. The regiment was commended for their behaving so well in the engagement. The most part of people did say they were betrayed, in which the Duke of Hamilton was blamed as having a chief hand. After this, Mackay with an army went the length of the Blair of Athol in pursuit of Cannon and his men, who immediately after the repulse at Dunkel, did break and scatter. But finding they were dispersed, he returned, having left some garrisons.

During the time that the north was in confusion, and many people much spoiled and distressed, the west country enjoyed peace, of which they had little before.

A GENERAL Meeting convened at *Douglas*, the 25th day of *September*, 1689.

After the meeting was modelled, this proposal was made by one to them: That considering the heat and passion that was in the meeting which was last in this place, (*viz. May 13th*) and what prejudice it had done, which might be evident to them all, it was therefore desired that some way and method should be fallen upon to prevent the like at this time. This the whole meeting thought very necessary, all being seasonable of the hurt sustained by heats at former meetings. Whereupon this mean was thought expedient for avoiding of passion at the time, *viz.* The ministers should be acquainted, that
the

† Here lieutenant Col. Wm. Cleland and capt. Ninian Steel, and many others of Angus's regiment were killed, when they had enjoyed the honour of these offices scarce three months.— This Wm. Cleland was a captain at Bothwell.

the meeting acknowledged that formerly they had been guilty of this fault, whereof they now saw the evil; but at the same time they were resolved to guard against it, —and desired that the ministers might do the like, and not to use irritating expressions one to another.

The ministers being come in, and prayer ended, a person pitched upon for that end, acquainted them with the resolution and desire of the meeting, with which the ministers were well satisfied *.

After it had been enquired, What was the business of greatest importance to be considered of? Mr. Lining said, The thing he thought of greatest consequence for them to deliberate upon, was, concerning union with the

† They might be the better satisfied, as this overture appears have proceeded from themselves, they fore-seeing they would meet with opposition in what they intended. It may not be improper here to insert a part of a letter from Colin Alison (who is several times spoken of before) to Sir Robert Hamilton, dated *Sept. 5th, 1689.*

Much Honoured Sir,

“MY earnest desire is, that the Lord may direct you in all your ways, for many have their eyes upon you, some expecting good and many expecting evil, which calls for much acquaintance with, and nearness to your Master, which I am confident is your study.

“But, ah! our confusions are upon the growing hand, and it seems the Lord in his holiness will have us brought as low and contemptible, if not more low, than ever. O how happy should we be, if we could but learn to live a life of dependence upon him, casting our eyes off all outward helps, for he seems to be testifying to us, that none will do us good, and I am made to say, that we have sought ourselves too much, for which he is now threatening to lay us low. But what measures or methods to fall upon, my capacity cannot win to take up: Only I think we are called to withstand the ministers seeking our concurrence in joining with the rest. Mr. Lining, on Sabbath last, was so bent on it, that he behoved to publish it in his doctrine, and cited scripture for it, *viz.* Luke i. anent Zacharias, who kept his course with the rest of the priests; as also Joseph of Arimathea. I told him my mind about it, that I was mistaken if he would be approven of God for publishing such doctrine, the cases being so unlike. Sir, I earnestly desire you will shew me your mind in this matter.

But which is saddest of all, we are a people fit for nothing. plagues from the Lord are so manifestly multiplied upon our spirits. O that the Lord would be intreated to breathe on us, and qualify us for what he calls for at our hands. Our remissness in zeal for his concerns has provoked him to great wrath, so that he hath in his anger divided us, and threatens to break us in pieces.

COLIN ALISON.

the ministers; and he gave an account of a conference which he and Messrs. Shielks and Boyd had at Edinburgh in *August* last, with some ministers appointed by the Commission of the Assembly to confer with them concerning union.

When they enquired at these ministers, That in case they should join with them, what should they do to save themselves from partaking of these defections that many of them were guilty of, as hearing of Curates, accepting of indulgences and toleration, and addressing for the same, &c.?

One of the said ministers replied, He would answer that question by distinguishing thus: These within a society are to do it one way, and these without that society are to do it another way.—As for the last, which (says he) is your case, the way to save yourselves from partaking of the sins of the society you are to join with, is; At your first uniting with them, you may draw up and enter a protestation against every thing you think sinful in that society, which shall be registered in the Books of Assembly and an extract thereof given you, and after you are united, ye shall have liberty to debate, remonstrate and protest against every thing sinful.

When Mr. Lining had done with this account, he desired the meeting seriously to consider this matter, and what they would do as to joining with the ministers on these terms offered by them.

When the ministers had gone out, the meeting did fall upon the consideration of this matter, as it was proposed, and they having discoursed upon the same, at length came to this resolution; That at the time, they could not see it their duty to unite with these ministers from whom they had formerly withdrawn upon just grounds, unless they confessed these defections they were guilty of, doctrinally and also synodically; that is, procuring an act to be made in a Synod or Assembly condemning these things as sins and defections, which might be set up as a beacon to hinder the generations to come, from splitting on such rocks.

Among other things moving some to agree with this resolution, this had its own weight, that if so rashly they should join with these ministers, without their repentment of their defections, it was to be feared, as the same would not be for their edification and advantage, which should be one end of our joining with them, but rather

rather prove hardening and confirming to them in their backslidings; so it would stumble and offend some of tender and weak consciences, and occasion their running upon unwarrantable extremes.

With this resolution the ministers were presently acquainted; who within a little came into the meeting. To whom they made this proposition, That seeing they had not clearness at the time to unite with these ministers upon the terms offered by some of them; yet whether or not would they join with the ministers who had freedom to concur in Presbyteries and Synods with these ministers with whom we could not join, against whose defections they would enter their protestation, and always after, remonstrate and debate against every thing wrong amongst them; and their design by joining, was to endeavour to help to carry on reformation.

This they desired the meeting to consider, and upon the morrow to give an answer thereunto. After discoursing a little concerning the said union and prayer, they parted that night.

Upon the morrow, *September 26th*, they conveened again. It was enquired at them, What answer they would give to the ministers concerning the question proposed by them last night. After discoursing about it, the meeting judged it most expedient, that many of them having never before deliberated upon it, and it being of no small consequence, they could not at this time answer the same, but desired longer time to consider thereupon.

When the ministers came in, they were acquainted with what the meeting had agreed upon.—Then after some debate about union with the ministers, this was at length resolved on; That seeing there could not be an unanimous agreement in this matter, a day should be set apart for fasting and prayer, to cry unto the Lord, that he would be graciously pleased to lead and guide us aright in this matter of so great importance, and help us so to manage it, as the same may tend to the glory of his great name, and the good of his church.—And the 22d of *October* next was appointed for that effect; and it was desired that the societies should observe the same.

And the next meeting was appointed at *Douglas*, the 6th of *November*, and that these who come to the same, should bring the minds of the societies they were sent from,

from, concerning this weighty affair which this meeting had been deliberating upon.

ALBEIT after the dispersing of the Highlanders the country was somewhat quiet, yet there were many complaints among the generality of people, that their grievances were not like to be redrested, nor justice executed upon notorious murderers, of which they had been in expectation; and they were beginning to utter their fears that the administration of the government might come to be bad, seeing many malignants were already, and others like to be put in places of power and trust, in judicatories and armies: whom, though the dispensations of providence have made them change their carriage a little, yet it was to be feared, that whenever opportunity should offer, they would put in practice their old inveterate principles of malignity.—Especially the United Societies had reason to complain of this, and to fear the worst which these men could do, who had been formerly their persecutors, and bore still their old hatred to them, though they saw it not for their interest at present to evidence the same, by putting forth their hands against them as before.

Among other things wherewith they were at present exercised, that concerning union with the ministers whom they had formerly withdrawn from, was of no small weight and moment, and did occasion many thoughts and searchings of heart, that they might know and be helped to carry aright in reference to the same. Though, upon the one hand, as they were desirous of uniting in the Lord, which they were willing to evidence to the world, and that right methods and measures should be fallen upon for attaining thereof. Yet, upon the other hand, they did not see that this union could be obtained in a way comfortable, without both the sinful cause of the division, which is defection and backsliding, were acknowledged and condemned, and also, that the holy cause, which is the anger of the Lord, were removed, of which there was small hopes appearing, while these ministers from whom they had withdrawn and now desired union with, instead of confessing, did defend the sinful and offensive courses of which they were guilty. And albeit the snare (and temptation) was broken, so that they were not actually going on, and continuing in their defections,—yet they could not see the offence and

scandal removed, unless these things were acknowledged and condemned; neither until that were, (though they should unite) had they ground to expect the Lord's countenance and blessing.

This was a dark, dead, and languishing time, wherein snares were difficult to be discerned, duty in some things not easy to be known. People were apt to offend and stumble, and there was danger of turning aside either to the left hand or to the right.

In this discouraging time, A General Meeting met at *Douglas* upon the 6th of *November, 1689.*

After the meeting was modelled, it was enquired, What the meeting ought first to consider of? Some answered, That the business concerning union with the ministers, was of greatest consequence, and therefore should be first deliberated upon, especially seeing a day had been set apart for prayer to be helped to carry aright in this matter; and at the last meeting it was desired that the societies might send their mind and resolution concerning the same, with these who were to be sent from them to this meeting.

Whereupon every one of the meeting were desired to shew what was the mind of the society they were sent from about this paper. So some of them gave in papers from correspondent meetings; others from single societies concerning that matter, and others did shew the mind of their societies by word of mouth.

But before the whole members of the meeting had told what was the mind of their societies, our ministers came in, to one of whom the papers given in, were delivered, who read the same; which put a stop to the going through thereof. Especially one thing occasioned a diversion therefrom, which was this: The meeting being acquainted that Sir Robert Hamilton was come to town, were desirous of his company among them.

Whereupon some went and signified this to him, who presently came in. After he had staid a little space, he rose up and spoke to this purpose: "That he not having been much among them, nor in any of their General Meetings since he came to Scotland, he did not know well what was amongst them. However there were some things he would now take this opportunity to speak his mind of, which in conscience he
" could

“ could not forbear but shew his dislike of, and protest
“ against. As,

“ 1st, The owning of the Prince of Orange to be
“ King upon such conditions as they had done, and wi-
“ thout taking of the covenants.

“ 2dly, The raising of Angus’s regiment, which was
“ a sinful association with malignants.

“ 3dly, The admitting any to be at General Meetings,
“ who came from the regiment, or were for trafficking
“ for union with them.

“ 4thly, Mr. Boyd his sitting in General Meetings;
“ or being employed by them to go to Edinburgh to
“ treat with the ministers.

“ 5thly, Joining with these ministers whom formerly
“ we had withdrawn from, upon the terms which our
“ ministers were desiring to do it in.”

When he had done, our ministers asked whether he would have an answer to these things by word presently, or by write? He said, he would have it in write, which he looked upon as the safest way, which if they would do, he would give a reply to the same in write also. But that they might the better answer it, the ministers desired he might give them these things in write, either that night or the next day; which accordingly he did the next day.

Though what that gentleman delivered in write, differ little from what is above, yet for the information and satisfaction of any who may be desirous of it, a true copy follows*.

* * * * *

To return; as is hinted above, that which Sir Robert Hamilton signified to the meeting put a stop to that which they were about, and did occasion debates and heats, which to settle and compose, it was thought fittest to part that night, and to meet next day, that then they might more calmly confer, and deliberate about matters.

Upon Nov. 7th, the meeting convened again, and considering that albeit some had shewed the mind of their societies concerning union with the Ministers, yet others

* This is not done, but left blank, and cannot now be had.

had not done it; therefore the whole might now shew what was the mind of the societies every one of them came from, about that matter, that our ministers might be acquainted therewith; which they were desirous of. Whereupon the same being particularly enquired at the whole meeting, They all (except two or three from some societies in Galloway) shewed it was the mind of the societies they were sent from, That at present they did not see it their duty to unite with these ministers from whom they had formerly withdrawn, without confessing of their defections doctrinally, and getting them condemned synodically.

After this was done, it was urged by some, that this question should next be propounded, *viz.* Whether or not the meeting would join with ministers who were for joining with these ministers (with whom we had not clearness to unite, except upon the foresaid terms) in synods and General Assemblies, with a protestation against their backslidings, &c. of which they were guilty?

Some were against the enquiring of this question, fearing that the consequent thereof might be about hearing of our own ministers; but that in place thereof that it might be considered by the meeting, That in regard we, for most part, had agreed concerning non-union with the ministers, we should next deliberate what was our further duty in reference to them, which might tend to their good, the advantage of the cause, the benefit of posterity, and our own exoneration.— And that which they thought would have a tendency to this, was, That we should jointly draw up a paper to be given in to the Assembly of ministers, containing briefly the grounds of our withdrawing from them; and that we were willing and desirous to join and unite with them again; which to obtain with the more freedom, comfort and satisfaction, and that we might have confidence to seek, and ground to expect the blessing of the Lord thereupon: To shew and remonstrate unto them the necessity of acknowledging and condemning these defections whereof they were guilty, in which we ought to be very earnest and pressing, and cry unto them for it †. But if they should not do this, then we might protest against

† But what if they will not suffer you to cry, nor allow you a hearing in the house, except you'll first submit yourselves to their assembly? — That this was actually the case, when afterwards put to the trial, the following account will declare,

against them for the same.—Whereupon the whole Meeting shewed their willingness, and desire that our ministers, and elders should go to Synods, and General Assemblies; and there plead with ministers, in order to convince them of, and to get them brought to acknowledge, and condemn defection: And not only to witness against the backslidings of the constituent members; but also against any thing that might be wrong in the constitution thereof. And to do other things, wherein still they might be two parties. But they were against embodying with them, without confessing and condemning of their defections.

And as for hearing of these ministers who would join in Synods and Assemblies, with a Protestation, &c. while in the mean time, these against whom they protest, did not acknowledge and condemn the same; This, some of the Meeting said the Societies from which they came were against hearing such ministers that would do so. And some said their Societies had never communed about the same; and others said their Societies were for hearing such ministers.

When this was done, the ministers were desired to come in. To whom the Preses of the Meeting shewed that the whole Meeting except two, or three, were unanimously against joining with the ministers, except upon the foresaid condition. After our ministers had heard this, they shewed their dissatisfaction with the making of not confessing of former defections, a ground of withdrawing, and standing at a distance at the time, from ministers. And that they were willing to give reasons against it, either by word or write, and that very rarely an union in the church, after a long division, was obtained that way, and as it would be desirable to them to see ministers acknowledge their defections; so they would endeavour to get them brought to do it.—For albeit we had sufficient ground to withdraw from these ministers, in the time of persecution, which was a broken and unsettled time; yet now, when the same was removed, and the church growing up in reformation, the case was altered: And as there was one way of contending then, which was by withdrawing, so there was another way now, which is by joining with a protestation against defection.

In answer to this, and in defence of what was resolved by the meeting in this matter; it was said, that it was granted

granted, the Lord by his wonderful providence had made a change, so that the snare being broken, these ministers were not now going on in these defections; Yet the tentation had left them, before they had forsaken it; and still they were defending what they had done: And to join with them while they continued so, would harden them therein, and offend and stumble others: And moreover, the church was not yet constituted, which if it were, and ministers zealously carrying on reformation, (of which there was little appearance) it would then be an encouragement to speak of joining with them.

After some debates, (wherein were too much heat and passion on both sides) at length this conclusion was put to this matter at the time. Our ministers undertook to write their mind concerning Union with the ministers: And to answer the objections which were given in against joining, without confessing and condemning defections, of which they would send copies to the Societies*.

And another Meeting was appointed to be at *Sanquhar*, Feb. 5th, 1690.

IN the interval betwixt this Meeting and the last, the complaints and discontents amongst the generality of people, was no way abated but rather augmented and increased, concerning many of these employed in the administration of the government, and many uttered their fears of matters growing worse. That which gave great occasion to this, was the adjourning of the Parliament, at which time, the redressing of grievances, and settling of affairs was expected; but the delaying of it till March, made some think there was no such thing designed.

In the mean time, though much of the land, especially the West, enjoyed peace and quietness, yet there were

* Of this writing there is no further account, but it is probable this hath been the original source of a pamphlet called *Church Communion*, which was published by Mr. Living a number of years afterward. It is observable, that as in the last Meeting they appointed a Fast day to pray for light and direction in this matter, but finding the effect of that, to be contrary to their desire, and design, so now they lay aside that mean for a time (as there is no fast days appointed by this Meeting as usually) and fall upon another expedient, in order to convert the people to the ministerial faith, since neither prayer, nor yet pleading will do it.

were great complaints among the godly that it was not now with them, as sometimes before it had been, (Psal. cvi. 14, 15.) and that darknes and deadnes was growing.

IN this discouraging and complaining time, our General Meeting convened at *Sanguhar* in *Nithsdale*, Feb. 5th, 1696.—After the Meeting was modelled and prayer ended, There were some Letters presented and read to the Meeting. One of which, was directed to them by Mr. James Wallace minister at *Inchinen*, which tended somewhat to the allaying and hindering of heats and debates, that otherways might have fallen out.

A true Copy whereof follows*.

*Right Reverend and dearly beloved Brethren and Friends
in the Lord,*

GRACE, mercy, and peace be multiplied upon you, from our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.—Being informed of a General Meeting of yours at *Sanguhar*; and also of some animosities and difference like to be amongst you at the Meeting, I judged it my duty (as one that has desired according to the measure of his grace given to me, to be faithful to him, his interest, and to you who has desired and endeavoured the same) to impart something of my poor thoughts, and give you my humble advice accordingly.

That in the first place you would agree upon a supplication to the next session of parliament, for abrogating and rescinding all laws made in former parliaments, against truth, equity and peace in this church and nation. That they will make laws and constitutions civil, for settling the Presbyterian government according to the word of God, and our sworn covenants, particularly in the year 1649. And if ye judge it fit, that these covenants be renewed as then. That they will study the purging of the state and army, of all erroneous scandalous, and profane persons, and such as had a hand in promoting of the late defection, and have been persecutors of these who did oppose the same: And that they put the church of Scotland in a posture to purge herself of

* Mr. Wallace lived not long after this.

of all scandalous and insufficient persons, and undeserving to bear office therein.

This will in the first place evidence to all well-wishers to the glory of God, his work, and the good of souls, that you mind an union upon right grounds, and will by the Lord his grace obtained, exceedingly contribute unto it, and will, I hope, keep you unite among yourselves, And whatever be the success of such an address, you will have more to join with you, and your number will be rather more, than less.

In the next place, I would have you moving slowly into any formal, settled union with any, until you see what you obtain, lest there be a new rupture, and a worse division, for if this be not granted, which you supplicate for, wherein will you unite? In the mean time, I would have you keeping concord amongst yourselves, unfriends will study to divide you, and so to break you, and do with you what they will, and then laugh at you.

In the last place, that with these that you are called to be unite with in the Lord, and with whom you now differ, I earnestly intreat that both in preaching, prayer and practices, you will do nothing to irritate, or make the breach wider, which may consist with a good conscience, not neglecting necessary duties, nor making yourselves partakers of other men's sins.

And that the Wonderful Counsellor, may give you counsel, keep you faithful in all duties, unite, humble, and patient, shall be the desire of,

*Your well-wishing Brother and servant in
the Lord Jesus Christ.*

JAMES WALLACE.

INCHINNEN, *January 31st, 1690.*

Another Letter was sent from lord Angus's regiment, wherein after giving reasons why they sent not some to this Meeting, they signify their desire to keep up correspondence with them, and to join with them in every thing that is for promoting, and defending the covenanted Presbyterian interest, &c.

There

† This Letter diverted these who were so bent for the fore-said Union, both now, and for some time after, and set them upon a project which in the conclusion turned to no effect.

There was a third Letter sent to them by Mr. Shields who at the time was at Montrose (with the regiment) wherein among other things, he acquaints them that he had sent some answer to Sir Robert Hamilton's protestation, having no time to perfect it*. This gave occasion to the Meeting to deliberate whether or not, it was necessary to read it. After speaking a little to it, most part of the Meeting were against reading of the same,—seeing though the protestation was given before them, yet they never undertook to answer the same, as our ministers did. And moreover, the gentleman to whom the Letter was directed, might have occasion to be displeas'd, upon the account that the reading of it here, would publish abroad both his name, and the things contained in the Letter, which should not be done with a private Letter.

When our ministers came in, this was spoken of again, Mr. Lining, and Mr. Boyd were much for the reading of it, saying that the Protestation was against the Meeting, and they ought to hear what was written in answer to the same. But most part of the Meeting were against the same (lest it might occasion if made public, that gentleman's suffering). After some debates concerning it, at length it was laid aside.

After this there was a fourth letter read, which was directed to this Meeting, from a Correspondent Meeting of some gentlemen, and others in the foot of Nithdale, and Galloway, as also a memorandum of some things to be represented to the Parliament, &c. They were brought to Sanquhar by Mr John Hepburn, and the laird of Caithlock. The import of the Letter, is their earnest desire that we should concur with them in such an address, or supplication, which they intended to draw up to give into the Parliament.

When the Meeting had heard the Letter and the Paper; they agreed in this, that though we did not object against any thing that was in the memorandum, nor against their giving in of the supplication unto the Parliament; yet considering our present circumstances, we could not go on jointly with them therein, unless they

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would

* Mr Shields in his Journal, mentions several days, in which he was writing an answer to this Protestation, in the last of which he says he was seized with a sweating sickness and fainting which obliged him to lay it aside unperfected.

would acknowledge and condemn these defections which some of them were guilty of, for if we should go on with them in this affair, it might be interpreted by some, that we were joint with them in other things also, which at the time, they could not see it their duty to do, except upon the terms of confessing and relinquishing these backslidings they were guilty of. However they thought it requisite, a discreet, and sober answer should be given them. After some debate what the same should be, and the way of sending it; at length it was concluded an answer should be written to them to this effect.

That albeit what zeal appeared in their paper, for the covenanted work of Reformation was commendable; yet to shew them we could not go alongst with them in what they desired, except they confessed and condemned these defections some of them were chargeable with; and withall, in a brotherly way, to admonish them not to cover, or defend, but acknowledge the same. Whereupon one was desired to draw up the Letter that night, and shew it to the Meeting to-morrow.

When the Meeting was speaking about petitioning the Parliament; as some of them said, if any paper were given in to them, there ought to be in it, a Protestation against several members in it: So though they were against joining with these people who desired our concurrence, nevertheless they were for this that we should remonstrate unto, and seek redress of these grievances mentioned in the memorandum, and others also, from the Parliament.—And it was concluded that if any extraordinary occurrence happened, a person at Edinburgh should appoint a General Meeting, and acquaint friends therewith, in order to deliberate what was their duty. But if none did occur, the General Meeting was concluded to be at *Douglas* the first Wednesday of May.

That night the Meeting parted, and upon the morrow, Feb. 6th, they convened again, The Letter which was desired the night before to be written, was read, but they did not accord about it, some were for acquainting their Societies, and advising better about it. Others made exceptions against some words in it, &c.

However after the Meeting was parted, it was subscribed by Mr. Lining and Mr. Boyd, and two others in the name of several other friends here present.

As before, so after the last Meeting, the discontents of the generality of the country, were not diminished, nor the grounds upon which they were founded taken away, especially the often and frequent adjournments of the Parliament, was one great cause of these complaints; for instead of having their many, and grievous grievances redressed by its sitting, they were by its delays like to lose all hopes of getting the same done. The great need of having the church and state settled upon good and lasting foundations, and of having justice to run down like a river, and judgment like a mighty stream, made some to think that the sitting of the Parliament was very necessary, and that the delay thereof was dangerous. Another of the complaints was, the employing and putting in of wicked men into places of power and trust, in judicatories and armies; which was just, and very rational to complain of, considering the hurt and detriment which they (many of them having been instruments of the late persecution) might do, when they saw opportunity to put it in execution.

In the mean time, an invasion from Ireland was looked for, and malignants at home were beginning to be brisk, who it was feared were carrying on a plot, which afterward might break out.

In this complaining and reeling time, our General Meeting convened at *Douglas*, March 27th, 1690.—The Meeting being modelled, and prayer ended, There was a Letter from lord Angus's regiment presented and read.

And Mr. Shields having drawn up a petition to be given in to the Parliament by the Societies, it was brought to, and read at this Meeting. After the reading thereof, and speaking to it a little, it was enquired at every one of the Meeting if they agreed therewith, and that it should be given in to the Parliament. All of them for themselves, (except two or three) were in the affirmative. And some of them had the mind of their Societies for it †.

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It

† The Reader need not wonder that at this time there were so few against it, and so many afterward, since the thing was new to them, and many had not considered the import of it, viz. that it was an owning, and acknowledging of these men, as the lawful representatives of the nation, the greatest part of whom had

It was thought expedient that ten men or thereby, out of every shire should subscribe it, in name of their brethren. And some to subscribe it before parting of this Meeting, and the rest afterwards at a Meeting at Leadhills, upon the 8th of April. But some fearing that the subscribing it here by a few, would be reckoned too hasty, and might occasion debates, were for the several correspondences getting copies thereof, that so as many of the Societies as could be got together the week following might hear the same read, and after mature deliberation, and consideration thereof, might (if they agreed therewith) condescend upon some men to go to the Leadhills, and in their name to subscribe it.

Accordingly several copies of it were written, and many of the Societies saw it.

An exact copy of the Petition follows.

To his majesty's High Commissioner for the Kingdom of SCOTLAND, and Remanent of Members of the High Court of Parliament,—The Humble Petition of the PERSECUTED PEOPLE of the West and Southern Shires

SHEWETH,

NONE in the three nations can be more obliged to make thankful acknowledgments of the mercy of the late Revolution and change of government, than we, who had the largest share of the miseries of that bondage these nations thereby are delivered from. We had never indeed great interests in the world to lose, and we never thought any thing too dear to be expended for adherence to the least point of truth or duty bound upon our consciences by the word of God, or any part of the church's established Reformation, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government.

But

had forfaulted their right to be such, by being either active persecutors, or aiders, and assisters of such, and sworn to be so; yea many of them had abjured the Covenants and Reformation, and as yet, there was no evidence of their repentance, but the contrary: Therefore after deliberation they judged it unlawful, and unreasonable to petition such men for the redressing of their grievances, or to expect that they would now restore, or reintegrate the Covenanted Reformation, who had been so active in destroying, suppressing, and subverting the same.

But what have been our oppressions, persecutions, and sufferings, by finings, forfaitures, harrassings, spoiling, intercommunings, chaces, wanderings in extremities of wants, imprisonments, tortures, banishments, and spilling of our blood. Sometimes under colour of law, sometimes without all colour of law for non-conformity with prelacy, non-submission to intolerable impositions on our consciences, and our testimonies against the late usurpations of the former reigns, their ecclesiastic supremacy, and boundless tolerations, prerogative, and absolute power, as the kingdom is not ignorant of. So the representation of our grievances, which we have in readiness to give, will in some measure manifest.

Nor is it the least of the great advantages we have reaped by their present Majesties ascending the throne, that now, we have not only the liberty of ease from these grievances, but of access to represent them, it being now declared to be the subjects right to petition, which was before accounted treason: This doth give us confidence, and our conscience lays upon us the necessity of addressing your Honours with this complaint and petition, humbly representing that not only our old long continued grievances are not redressed (whereby the hope and expectations of many thousands founded upon the princely promises of his Majesty's declarations, and stipulations of the claim of right, at his acceptance of the crown, have hitherto been frustrated) but also several new grievances are multiplied, by the several adjournments of the Parliament, so consternating and discouraging to all.

1. We therefore cannot but with many others complain that our longing, and languishing expectations and desires of redress of grievances are not satisfied, but still postponed and delayed by the frequent adjournments of Parliaments, to the danger and detriment of his Majesty's interest, to the advantage and advancement of the designs of the common adversaries, to the discouragement of the most faithful and constant subjects and friends of the common cause, and the stumbling of many others, who are thereby confounded with dismal apprehensions and jealousies, lest these delays may prove designed disappointments, which we believe is far from his Majesty's intentions; we therefore humbly request that there may be more adjournments, until grievances be cognosed and redressed.

2. We complain, though Prelacy, or the government, estate and office of the Bishops be abolished; yet the many cruel acts and edicts of Parliament and council, made in favours thereof, and pressing conformity thereunto, and for suppressing Presbyterial government are not repealed. We therefore petition that Presbyterian government may be restored and reintegrated in its purity, freedom and full power, as it was established in the year 1649; the church and state-constitutions thereanent be revived, and all acts of parliament or council against the Covenants and work of reformation, or in favours of abjured Prelacy, be rescinded.

3. We complain, though Prelacy be abolished, yet its pillars and supporters, the Prelatic curates, or Episcopal ministers, the bane and brand of this poor church, and the source of all our late oppressions and present confusions, are in many places continued in the peaceable possession of their intrusions, and others of late intruded against the will of the parishes, and notwithstanding of their opposition, for very little accession to which some have been long kept in prison; while many Presbyterian ministers, long extruded and persecuted, are not restored to any settlement.

We therefore supplicate that a full and free General Assembly be called and appointed, consisting of Presbyterian ministers, according to the old constitutions; to order church-affairs, and inquire into public scandals, with power to depose, suspend, deprive or remove the foresaid intruders from the churches, by the authority wherewith Christ hath vested them; and to provide for the planting of all the churches and Presbyteries with able and faithful ministers; and all this under the patronage, and with the sanction of civil authority.

4. We complain, though Prelacy be abolished, yet its foundations and fountains, the old usurpations of Episcopalian supremacy and patronages, are not yet abolished, whereby a door is kept open for the re-introduction of all corruptions, innovations, defections and divisions in the church, and for the magistrate's encroaching upon the prerogatives of Jesus Christ, the only Head and King of the church, and the liberties of the church, his free kingdom.

We therefore earnestly beseech, that acts may be passed, delivering the church from the bondage of patronage; restoring to her the privilege of the election of her

her pastors; and abrogating the supremacy, with all crastianism; and that the late indulgences, flowing from the ecclesiastic supremacy, and the late toleration given by virtue of absolute power, and conveyed by stopping and disabling the ancient penal laws, be there disannulled and declared to be contrary to law.

5. We complain, that our national covenants, which we avouch to be of indispensable obligation, have been very long abused and trampled upon, to the astonishment of all nations that have heard of the unparalleled breaking of them, burning of them, enacting them by law to be renounced and abjured, and making it criminal to own them; while many other contradictory ensnaring oaths, tests and bonds, have been imposed upon people's consciences.

We therefore humbly move to your Honours, that acts of parliament may be passed, condemning these unlawful impositions of the late contrary oaths, and vindicating and approving these reproached covenants; and that your Honours may be pleased to think upon some expedient course for the renewing of the same, the administration of the way and order of it being left to the General Assembly.

6. We complain of the continuance of our sufferings to this day, even in this reviving in our bondage, while the causes of our and our brethren's sufferings, especially our active endeavours to defend our lives, religion and liberties, against tyranny and unjust violence, are reproached, and declared (by yet standing laws) to have been rebellion. Acts of forfaultries and donetories of Estates are yet standing unrepealed, and the unjust possessors yet keeping them from the right owners. Many of our brethren are yet in servitude in foreign lands whither they were banished; while in the mean time our enemies, and the enemies of the king and kingdom apprehended or discovered in rebellion against the present government, are indemnified, and suffered to escape justice, and thereby emboldened to go on in their conspiracies.

We therefore, with all submission, humbly intreat your Honours, in order to our relief from our sufferings, to repeal these wicked laws that enacted them, and rescind these acts that branded our lawful endeavours with so odious a character; and that your Honours may take some speedy and effectual course to rescind these acts of forfaultries,

forfaults and finings for adhering to the covenanted reformation, and to cause restitution be made of estates and fines; &c. to their proper and righteous owners; and take some consideration of the widows and children of those that have suffered unto death in fields or scaffolds, or who have died in their banishment, or such who have lost law-suits because they had not access to, or durst not appear in their own vindication and defence for the hazard of the times; and that some way may be thought upon for the relief and bringing home of those that are yet alive in their banishment; and in the mean time that in these and the like particulars old sufferers may be redressed, before the present rebels be indemnified.

7. We complain, that though His Majesty's declaration from this kingdom, took notice of many evil counsellors, that had been the instruments of all these mischiefs he came to deliver us from; and upon their crimes founded both the equity and expediency of his laudable expedition, yet not only many of these grievous to the nation, because they were sworn tools of tyranny, for enslaving them and supplanting their liberties, and bigotted enemies to Presbytery, are admitted to public trust and employed in the affairs of the kingdom, to the endangering our religion and liberties, and of undermining and betraying the King's interest; but even many of the murderers of our brethren are both connived at, and encouraged, and entertained in places of power and trust, in court, country, army, and supreme judicatories.

For the which cause, with all respect to many noble Lords and worthy Gentlemen that have their deserved place in this present parliament, We are constrained in conscience to take the boldness to protest against all, of what quality soever, that sit in that judicatory, as representatives in the supreme council of the kingdom, who have been, and are evil counsellors, disaffected to the government, malignant enemies to the covenanted reformation †, cruel persecutors of the godly owning the same; and especially such as have been criminally accessory to the shedding the innocent blood of our brethren that died as martyrs for adhering thereunto.

We therefore, in all humility and earnestness; supplicate, obtest and beseech your Honours, in your wisdom
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† Many then, and some yet think that this comprehended almost the whole.

to provide some laws (according to the laudable precedents of your noble progenitors) for removing out of trust, and out of capacity of doing more mischief to the king, church, country and armies, such instruments of the late king's tyranny, and of our late slavery, against whom the present king declared in his declaration, and who declared their averfeness to admit His present Majesty to the throne. For we can never believe, that they who betrayed our laws and robbed us of our privileges under the last reign, will ever administer justice, or do us any good under the present government. We cannot but be always in fears, while we remain in the hands of our old oppressors, in whose conduct and administration, we could never see any thing but rage, and rapine, and unjust violence.

Finally, We request and crave of your Honours that we may have liberty in due time, according to course of law, to impeach those that murdered our brethren in the fields without all process or shadow of law; as is taken notice of in His Majesty's declaration for this kingdom; and as the cry thereof did call His Majesty to appear for our relief; so it still continues to cry for vengeance; and Almighty God, to whom it belongs, craves of your Honours to see to the purging of the land from blood, which cannot be otherwise purged than by the blood of them that shed it.

May it please your Honours to consider the premises, and to take such measures in satisfying these our humble desires, backed with the importunate cries of many thousands of the best subjects of the nation, that God may be glorified, religion encouraged, the peace and prosperity of the church promoted, their Majesty's throne established in righteousness, the people be happy under their government, and the Lord delight to dwell among us. And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

Subscribed in our name, and by commission from, and at the desire of many others of the same sentiments with ourselves, by

UPON the morrow the meeting convened again,—
where the petition was read. Any who had freedom to

subscribe it, were desired to do it. Whereupon, about ten men subscribed the same in the name of the societies in the shire of Air, and some persons in the overward of Clydesdale, did it in their own name. But these representing the societies of Renfrew, and the netherward of Clydesdale, (some of whom having no clearness themselves, nor commission from their societies for subscribing it, did it not) were desired to let their societies see and consider it, in order to send some to Glasgow next week, to subscribe it in their name; as also, these for the societies in Galloway, Nithsdale and Anandale, being in the like circumstances, were desired to let their friends see it, in order to send some to the Lead-hills to subscribe it.

The next meeting was appointed to be at *Douglas*, the first Wednesday of *June*. But in case of extraordinary emergents, as an invasion of the Irishes or French, some at Edinburgh were to appoint it sooner, and acquaint their friends therewith.

The night before it was agreed upon, that a Letter should be written in the name of the Meeting to Lord Angus's regiment; which was done, and the same was read that day. It was agreed upon to be sent with some additions, and Michael Shields was desired to write it over again with the same, subscribe it in their name, and send it to the regiment; which was accordingly done: the substance of which follows.

Douglas, March 27th, 1690.

Dear Brethren,

WE received your Letter. Albeit the scruples and hesitations do yet remain, which many of us had concerning the regiment from the very first raising thereof, occasioned by the admission of malignant, wicked, and profane men into the army, (the corruptions whereof still increase) and some of them taken in amongst yourselves; and though we still fear the sin, snare, and danger of sinful associations; yet we desire to sympathize with you, and to keep correspondence with you, in so far as may be for your edification and advantage, and may not strengthen your hands, nor involve ourselves in any sinful course, that ye are, or may be afterward in-sinared in.

According to your desire, we take this opportunity to use some freedom, yet we hope, and intreat you will
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take the same in good part, since love to you incites us to the same; and we desire you will use the like freedom with us.—We would not have you content so long as there are so many malignant and profane men in the army, and while there are any such among yourselves; but in your stations, to the uttermost of your power witness against it. Seek for a reformation thereof, for to get and keep places was not the end for which ye took up arms, it was rather (professedly) to be in a better capacity to witness and wrestle against corruptions in the army, and to endeavour in your capacity to seek and cry for redressing grievances in church and state.

We earnestly request ye would keep up your christian societies. Be much in private prayer. Cry mightily that the Lord will bless you and us with the knowledge of the times and our own duty.—If ye grow slack and remiss in secret prayer and public witnessing, ye have ground to fear, that next your hands wax feeble in the day of battle. Consider under what character ye go, as a people more strict, zealous and religious than others. Small faults in you are more heinous, and will do more hurt than in others; and wherever ye come, let *your light shine before men*, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them, both in yourselves and others. Forbear these things to which soldiers are much addicted. Pray that ye be not led into temptation, but delivered from evil. Abstain from sinful and scandalous games, as cards, dice, &c. the first of which we hear some of you are guilty of, which is not a little wounding to us. Refrain from duels, and fighting, quarreling, either among yourselves, or with others, and from drunkenness, which often occasions these unmanly and unchristian actions. Forbear, and forgive one another. Be not of a revengeful, but of a gospel-spirit.

It was not a little wounding, as well as surprising, to hear of the extravagances committed by many of you upon the King's birth-day, *November* last, the noise of which hath gone much abroad, whereby many of your brethren were offended, and the wicked confirmed and hardened in their practice, we hope ye are against observing anniversary days as well as we, and that ye will mourn for what ye have done.

We wish that some amongst you may see the evil of their unconcernedness at hearing of the scruples, dis-

couragements and perplexities which many tender friends and zealous Christians had at the on-going and continuing of the regiment ; and albeit we desire all irritating, untender speaking or writing may be forborne, yet seeing we neither could, nor can go on in the regiment, and considering the evil and danger of sinful associations, and to free ourselves from partaking in the guilt of the same, we beseech and obtest you, that ye may resolve in the Lord's strength not to continue in arms unless it be for the glory of God, and the carrying on, and advancing of reformation. Let not the flatteries and insinuations, nor the frowns and threatenings of men, so prevail, as to draw or drive you unto, or make you continue in any course dissonant unto, or inconsistent with the noble cause for which many of you formerly contended and suffered.

We wish ye may be endued with true and holy zeal, and boldness, without fear or shame to avouch the owning of the former and present testimony. Reckon it no discredit, but your honour to be called Covenanters. In every place study a practice suitable to such an honourable designation.

As for your going to Ireland, we are glad that many of you are so little for it, and we cannot see it expedient at present, considering what a profane and malignant army (for the most part is in that land) to join with, the conduct ye behoved to come under, and the bad state of the cause and quarrel ye would have to fight for, and also the great danger this land is, or may be in very suddenly.

We are very glad to hear of your resolution not to come under the conduct of lieutenant general Douglas. We think ye ought to refuse to come under the same at all hazards, and to shew your dislike of employing him, or any such in the army. We desire you'll represent to the Parliament the usage you met with Dunkel, that the same may be enquired into, and that it, and other grievances may be heard and redressed.

You may remember, at the raising of the regiment it was thought convenient that there should be elders and a session in it, to exhort and reprove for faults ; and that fast-days should be appointed and observed among you : the omission of these things is unpleasant. Not desiring to trouble you further, we remain

Your loving friends and brethren,

Sub-

Subscribed in our name, and at our appointment, by the clerk of our General Meeting,

MICHAEL SHIELDS.

ACCORDING to the appointment of the Gen. Meeting, several persons came to the Lead-hills, *April 8th*, some of whom subscribed the petition to the Parliament, but some were against that way of subscribing thereof, and would have had more in it.

Mr. Lining undertook to endeavour to get it presented to the Parliament; and he coming to Edinburgh, after advising with some persons there, it was thought most convenient to give it in to a member of the parliament, to be by him presented to them. So it was delivered to Sir John Monro of Foulis, who was not only a member of the parliament, but of the committee for the church. He several times offered it to the said committee, who — — — — — †.

At the foresaid place and day, Mr. Lining and some elders drew up the causes of a fast to be observed upon the 18th of *May*; which is to be kept as a day of humiliation and prayer.

1st, Because of the abounding sins of all ranks, *viz.* of the king, council and inferior judicatories, church, army, and people. 2^{dly}, In particular, for all the favours God hath shewed to the land, yet its representatives in the state, have done little for the glory of God and the legal establishment of the covenanted reformation of religion. 3^{dly}, Because, though the army be raised up for the defence of religion as well as liberty, yet many of them are found grossly guilty of being even enemies to the power and purity of religion. 4^{thly}, Because, though the Lord by his dispensations be calling all of us to repentance, yet there is much impenitency under former defections and scandals, both in ministers and people, and here we would pray for a down-pouring of the Spirit of repentance upon both, that God might have his glory, and his church might find mercy. 5^{thly}, The uncon-

† Here Mich. Shields doth not relate how contemptuously this petition was by the committee rejected, and as this committee were accounted among the best affected to religion in that parliament, so it now appeared, that these people were not deceived who expected no redress of grievances from such men as had been so deeply involved in the evils complained of.

unconcernedness with our dangers from combinations of papists and malignants at home, and with the distress Ireland now is lying under from these, and to pray that God would break these, and make us more to know our duty towards that distressed church of Ireland.

ALBEIT the ground of many people's complaints, *viz.* The several adjournments of Parliament, was removed, when this session did sit down, whereby they were put in hopes of getting grievances redressed, yet the want of performance of some things, and in such a manner, made some of them to remain; especially the putting and keeping of many in public trust, who were malignants, and disaffected to religion; and the not bringing to condign punishment, these among their hands who deserved it, but setting them at liberty. And the settling of church government, as in the year 1592, and not as it was in in the years 1648, and 1649, gave occasion of discontent, and complaint. At the beginning of this session of Parliament the names of court and club party were very great; yet afterward, the club party taking in known malignants, into their cabal, made them less esteemed, and severals fell off from them, so that the court party had the greatest sway. The Highlanders being defeated at Cromdale, made the malignants in the Parliament more faint than before, and tho' this victory was very remarkable, and several prisoners taken at it, and some afterwards, yet none were brought to condign punishment, which heightened the complaints of many and lessened the authority of the government, so that the enemies thereof did not so regard or fear its power, as otherwise it would have done.

In this time when some were pleased and others were displeased with matters both in church and state; Our General Meeting met at *Douglas*, June 4th, 1690, where it was agreed upon that the covenants as renewed at *Leshmahagow* March 3d, 1689, should be printed, and twenty pounds sterling was to be given for printing 2000 copies, and *Colin Alison* was appointed to wait upon the press.

Upon the consideration that shortly there would be a General Meeting of ministers, and thereafter a General Assembly, it was thought fit that the Meeting should deliberate upon what was their duty in reference thereunto. And it was resolved that a Paper should be writ-

ten, subscribed, and given into the ministers containing a representation of our grievances, wherein we might be free, shewing the grounds of our former withdrawing from them, with our earnest desire of union at the time, upon good terms; Also, to contain a Protestation against defections; for drawing up of which paper, five men were nominate that were present in the Meeting, viz. James Wilson, Peter Walker, William McNeil, _____ and Michael Shields. Likewise for the foresaid end, it was desired that Sir Robert Hamilton, Earlstoun, William Stewart, John Mack, Archibald Hunter, and John Campbel should be acquainted therewith: Which persons were all to convene at *Douglas* upon the 16th of June instant, in order to draw up a draught of the said paper.

The Meeting was desired to acquaint their Societies with this conclusion, and that correspondence should meet, and after deliberation, draw up their mind concerning it, and what they would have in the said paper. And the paper being drawn up, it was to be sent to Edinburgh to our ministers that they might revise the same. And they with consent, were to appoint the time of the next General Meeting and send advertisement thereof, with some copies of the paper that the Societies might consider it, and send their mind to the next General Meeting*.

ACCORDING to the appointment of the last General Meeting some persons convened at *Douglas*, upon the 16th of June, but not all who were acquainted therewith, as was desired.

At night Sir Robert Hamilton came, and gave some reasons (first verbally, and then in writing) why he could not accept of their commission, the tenor of which shall be here inserted.

Douglas, June 16th, 1690.

Christian Friends,

THOUGH I have not freedom to accept of, or assist in your late commission to me, yet for the exoneration of my own conscience; the tender sympathy
I owe

† Here they again return to their former project for union, but it is now grown out of fashion to appoint Fast-days by the General Meetings.

I owe you all; the great desire I have to serve you in the Lord, to the utmost of my poor capacity; the old esteem and affection, I hope, I justly bear to many of you, and for the further vindication of truth, when called thereunto, I came to the place appointed notwithstanding of bodily indisposition, and other difficulties in my way, and gave some reasons both of my refusing your commission, or of sitting with some of the persons delegate, which, I hope will save me from the mistakes of any not prejudged, and exoner, and vindicate me at the hands of these who, I hope may be singly aiming at the glory of God, and labouring to tread again in the good old paths; as also, save me hereafter from any such trouble at your hands, while matters are so managed and carried on by you. For which causes I have judged it fit, here to insert the reasons of my declining, which I gave in verbally to your delegates, which are as followeth.

1. I cannot accept this commission, as from the General Meeting being from a mixt company, part of whom are engaged in, and many active in carrying on the late courses of defection, a part of which are specified in that Protestation I formerly gave in writing to Mr. Shields and Mr. Lining, at the Meeting.

2. Because restricted by this commission to Society papers, coming from men of various judgments, and practices, both as to what is the testimony of the day, and the stating and managing of it, and so it is folly to expect a faithful testimony to be had from amongst them.

3. Because some of these delegated, are not only of contrary sentiments, but have been, and still are active in carrying on the late defections.

4. Because Messrs Shields, Lining and Boyd, are not included amongst these ministers whose defections are to be protested against, while as much, if not more, guilty in the late defections than they.

5. Because it is concluded that these forementioned men, were to revise the protestation before it be given in.

6. Because there is not due time given to deliberate on matters of such consequence, neither to consult God in it, nor the faithful in the land, nor our own consciences, as to our accession in the provocation, &c.

This being what I spoke to the delegates.

I am your real friend in the Lord,

ROBERT HAMILTON.

To

To return again; Upon the morrow more came, and there were the draughts of two papers read, and likewise some little papers from correspondences containing exceptions against many ministers, after some debates and deliberation, there was a short minute drawn up containing not only some of those things which gave us ground to withdraw formerly from many ministers, but also what is dissatisfying to us in their practice at present, a copy whereof followeth.

Some particulars which gave us ground to withdraw from many ministers.

1^{ly}, Joining with Prelacy, and hearing of Curates. 2^{dly}, Accepting of indulgences, and justifying that practice. 3^{dly}, Lying by from duty in time of danger, and ambiguous preaching, not discovering the sins and snares of the time. 4^{thly}, Not joining with the faithful ministers that appeared publicly for the cause of Christ, but condemning their endeavours and reproached sufferers. 5^{thly}, Some taking oaths and bonds. 6^{thly}, Accepting of, and addressing for the toleration. 7^{thly}, Owing, praying, and pleading for the authority of tyrants, and usurpers, and condemning these who did disown the same.

Some things which are dissatisfying to us at present.

1. Not confessing and condemning these above written defections.
2. Not pleading for, nor mentioning of the covenants, in their addresses to the King and Parliament, that the land hath broken them, and that they are yet binding.
3. Not minding people of their former backslidings.
4. Admitting some to be elders who had taken the test, and are guilty of other gross scandals.
5. Not preaching against the sin and snare of sinful association with malignants, and not discovering the danger of bringing them into judicatories and armies.
6. Not signifying their dislike of the King and Queen's involvement into the sin and danger of defending and maintaining the church of England.
7. Admitting of scandalous persons to the sacraments.
8. Some pleading for the keeping in of some prelatie curates.
9. Ordaining some to be ministers who had taken the test.

We ought also to shew our dissatisfaction with the defectiveness of the act establishing the church government.

It was resolved that copies of this Paper should be shewed to correspondencies; and a copy thereof, with a Letter sent to Mr. Alexander Shields, desiring him to draw the Paper (enlarging the particulars in the minute) that is to be given in to the ministers. The Letter was immediately written and sent to Mr. Shields:

The next General Meeting was appointed at *Douglas*, August 13th, 1690.

As it was feared that papists and malignants were carrying on a wicked plot, which might break out unexpectedly, so the same was found true; for one of a deep reach, and large extent, was discovered in England, in which many of the three kingdoms were concerned, and some were suspected to to have a hand in it of whom better things were expected, *viz.* Some of the club party, who not long before made a great noise. The chief of them, as, the earl of Anandale, lord Ross, (who going to London, was taken, and imprisoned in the Tower) and Skelmorlie returned from the Parliament, which did sit till July.

Several acts past therein which tended to the settling and allaying the discontents and complaints, which before were great. Nevertheless not a few remained, and the ground whereupon they were founded was not removed. But notwithstanding, the said plot was discovered, and the designs of enemies frustrated, and tho' King William got a notable victory over King James and his cut-throat Irishes and Frenches, in Ireland, yet the Highlanders (accustomed to rob) brake out again spoiling and plundering in Monteith, and other places, which alarmed the country. To prevent which, it was ordered the Fensible men in the West should rendezvouze. Whereupon a great number appeared in arms, and came to Glasgow, but the rebels returned. As for the Society people, many of them appeared in arms also, with others, but this occasioned some debates among them, for though they counted it their duty to oppose the enemy, yet they demurred to associate with many of the country.

OUR General Meeting convened at *Douglas*, August 13th, when it was expected that the paper to be given in to the ministers would be ready to be seen, but Mr. Shields being in the Highlands, with the regiment, occasioned

caused the hindrance of it at this time, as also the printing of the Covenants, &c. as it was desired he should revise Lesmahagow-work before it was printed.

At this time there was a question started and enquired particularly at all the members of the Meeting, viz. Whether they thought it fittest to signify to the ministers in that paper to be given in to them, that unless they confessed and condemned all these defections they were guilty of, they would not join with them; or to leave it out? The whole Meeting, except three, were for leaving it out, being desirous to know the ministers mind as to these things, before they positively acquainted them whether they would join, or not: for they thought albeit they were not particular therein, yet they could not see that thereby any obligation was laid upon them to unite. Which Paper, when drawn up by Mr. Shields, the Meeting desired copies thereof to be sent to Correspondencies, to the end that they might see and consider the same: And send their mind concerning it to the next General Meeting.

The next General Meeting, was appointed to be at Douglas upon the last Wednesday of September*.

ALBEIT a party of the rebels were defeated in the North, and another near Cardross, by a party of Angus's regiment, and some horse; yet they appeared again, consisting for most part of horse, having encouragement both from abroad, and at home. However not long after they all scattered.

The Parliament convened again, but did not sit long, neither did they much of consequence, except laying on fourteen shillings Scots upon every hearth in the kingdom, save hospitals, and the houses of those living on charity. At this many were displeased.

After the Parliament rose (being adjourned to the 22d of October) the commission of Parliament for forfeitures and fines, did sit, as also the commission for visitation of Universities, &c. who put off several of the Regents, and all the Professors, doctors, and Principals of the Colleges of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St. Andrews.

K k k 2

AT

* The chief occasion of this Meeting is disappointed yet no Fast-days.

AT the last Meeting this General Meeting was appointed to have been upon the last Wednesday of Sept. But in regard Mr. Shields being longer in coming to Edinburgh than was expected, there was not time enough to draw up the Paper foresaid, before the Meeting: So it was thought fit to delay it eight days, and advertisement hereof to be sent to the country (with some copies of the Paper) that some of our friends might meet upon the 1st day of October at *Douglas*,

ACCORDINGLY upon the said day our General Meeting convened at *Douglas*.—After prayer, &c. this question was a little agitated, concerning hearing these ministers who defend their defections, and condemn our former testimony: But they could not come to any unanimous resolution about it. Wherefore it being laid aside, the ministers were sent for, and came in. The paper to be given in to the ministers was read: After which there were some debates whether or not we could petition this ensuing General Assembly, seeing many who would be members, are guilty of these things whereof we are complaining (since this was to sustain a great part of them as judges in their own cause, and case). It was answered to this purpose*, That the constitution
of

* As to the constitution it hath been asserted by many, and offered to be proven, that the greater part of the constituent members were guilty of such scandalous compliances, swearing sinful and perjurous oaths, &c. as that by the word of God, and the acts and constitutions of this church, they were obnoxious to church censure. And whereas it is said they were not precluded, let K. William's Letter to the Assembly dated 13th Feb. 1690. be viewed, where it is said, Whereas there hath been humble supplication made to us by several ministers, who lately served under Episcopacy, we have thought good to signify our pleasure to you, that you make no distinction of men, otherwise well qualified for the ministry, who are willing to join with you, in acknowledgment of, and submission to the government of church and state, though they have formerly conformed to the law introducing Episcopacy, and that ye give them no disturbance for that cause, or upon that head. And it is our pleasure, that until we give our further direction, you proceed to no process, &c. and in another Letter, dated June 15th, 1691, he shews that they had sufficiently understood his intentions, by their unanimous inclinations, to unite with such of the clergy who have served under Episcopacy, excepting that neither they nor any church meeting do meddle in any process, or business that may concern the purging out of the Episcopal ministers. It this was not a manifest preclusion of these Assemblies the
reader

of the General Assembly was right, and the members no way prelimited, and when so, we might present our grievances to them, desiring that they would acknowledge and condemn defections; and though many of them were guilty of these things we complained of, yet all were not. But if we should not give in this paper to them; what way could we keep up a testimony against these defections?

The paper (or petition) being read over again, and several things helped in it, and somewhat added thereunto, thereafter this conclusion was agreed unto, That copies of the same should be written and sent to the correspondencies, who might consider it, and send two or three, or as many of their number as they thought fit, to *Edinburgh*, against the 21st of *October*, with power from them to subscribe in their name if they agreed therewith, some of whom might be then and there descended upon to present it to the Assembly, having a commission from the rest for that effect.

Likewise these persons who were to meet at *Edinburgh*, were to appoint the time of the next General Meeting.

It was desired that the 14th of this instant should be observed by our societies a day of prayer and supplication, that we may be directed aright in managing this paper above mentioned; as also, upon the account of the General Assembly.

ACCORDING to the conclusion agreed upon at the last General Meeting, some persons from several correspondencies met at *Edinburgh*, upon the 21st of *October*; but in regard all were not come who were expected, and that some were for adding somewhat to the paper, about which they were met; nothing was done that day save the reading of it, and appointing to meet next morning at 8 o'clock.

Upon the 22d of *October*, (more persons being then come, but none from the netherward of *Clydesdale*,
albeit

reader may judge. Accordingly the Assembly was obedient to the royal mandate, as appears by the letter presented to them by Mr. J. Law and Mr. D. Blair,—so as that there were hundreds of these old abjured, perjured, erroneous, scandalous, Episcopal Curates continued in the peaceable possession of churches and stipends, without any evidence of their repentance. See Mr. Clarkson's plain reasons, P. 31, —39.

albeit two were chosen for that effect) all being met, some words were altered in the paper, and some added thereto, as was desired, and so was agreed upon to be written for subscribing against the next day. Upon the 23^d of *October*, after reading it again, it was subscribed by several hands in the name of many others.

After subscribing of this paper, five men, *viz.* Thomas Latimer, James Muir, William Swanston, William Woodburn and Robert Cowan were chosen in name of the rest to present it to the Assembly, to desire an answer, and to use diligence therein, of which they were to give an account: But in respect it might be enquired at them, If they had any commission from their friends for what they did, it was thought necessary to write a line directed to them; which was presently done, the tenor of which follows,

To Tho. Latimer, Jam. Muir, Wm. Swanston, Wm. Woodburn and Robert Cowan.

Christian and assured Friends,

BEING confident of your care and diligence, we hereby intrust you with the delivering and presenting of this paper, containing the complaints of many Presbyterian people in several shires of Scotland to the reverend Assembly; earnestly desiring you to solicit them that they would be pleased to vouchsafe you an answer to the same. Subscribed by

WM. SPENCE.

Albeit it was much desired that the paper, with all possible diligence should be given in to the Assembly, yet it was thought fit to delay the same, until it was known what was done with the paper given in to them by Messrs. Lining, Shields and Boyd. The issue of which business, with the way of managing it is not proper here to relate, an account thereof being already published; nevertheless it is not unsuitable to mention this, That it was very offensive to many, that the Assembly by a vote refused to read the paper given in to them by the foresaid ministers, (after hearing the reasons by the committee of overtures why it should not be read, which indirectly condemned it before the same was heard) especially the persons intrusted with the subscribing and in giving of the said paper and some others, were

fo

ſo offended, that they thought it fit to ſhew their diſſatisfaction therewith to the Aſſembly, yet not in an irritating manner, but with all due reſpect.

Whereupon a paper was drawn up and ſubſcribed by the five men before-named; a true copy whereof followeth:

To the Moderator and remanent members of this General Aſſembly.

Right Reverend and Honourable,

BEING intruſted by our friends with the delivering to this reverend Aſſembly of a paper containing the complaints of many Presbyterian people in ſeveral ſhires of Scotland, we have taken this opportunity of preſenting the ſame, humbly (yet earneſtly) beſeeching you would be pleaſed to take notice thereof.

We are indeed loath to trouble you, as knowing you have great and weighty affairs to take up your time; yet we hope your wiſdom will ſee ſuch a neceſſity of hearing the complaints of a poor people, longing for, and deſirous of peace, concord and union in the Lord, as to move you to a diverſion for a little, and take ſome conſideration of what they have to ſay.

Right Reverend, The in-giving of it was delayed until the adjusting of that buſineſs of Meſſrs. Thomas Lining, Alexander Shields and William Boyd; the iſſue of which we expected ſhould have tended much to the healing of the breach, and composing of differences. But with all due reſpect and reverence, we humbly conceive that we have gotten one complaint added to theſe we had formerly, *viz.* your not only reſuſing to read the representation given in by Mr. Lining, Mr. Shields, &c. but the voting in Aſſembly not to read it; becauſe (they ſay) it doth contain groſs miſtakes, unſeaſonable and impracticable propoſals, and uncharitable and injurious reflections upon godly miniſters, tending rather to kindle contentions than to compoſe diviſions. By the mentioning of this, we deſign neither irritation nor reflection; but ingenuouſly to lay open before you what grieves us, in order to get the ſame removed. Again humbly beſeeching

seeing that you will hear the same, and grant a favourable answer, which is expected by

THOMAS LATIMER.

JAMES MUIR.

WM. SWANSTON.

WM. WOODBURN.

ROBT. COWAN.

Here follows the larger paper as written by Mr. Shields, and corrected and agreed upon by many of the societies:

To the Moderator, and remanent members of this reverend General Assembly.—The complaints and humble Petition of many Presbyterian people, living in several shires of Scotland.

SEEING the Lord in the riches of his infinite mercy wherein he hath abounded to this generation, in the late revolution of providence, far beyond all possible acknowledgments, hath been pleased to grant at length this long-waiting, and long-wished-for privilege of seeing a free General Assembly of Presbyterian ministers gathered and fenced in the name of our Lord Jesus; we cannot, and must not omit this opportunity of applying ourselves thereunto for a redress of these many grievances under which we have groaned these many years. The chiefest, bitterest, and most burdenson of which, (though we have not wanted our share of other burdons very heavy) hath been, and yet remains to be, even in this plenty, our scarcity and famine of gospel-ordinances, wherein we have languished of a long time, sighing over our silent Sabbaths, as sheep scattered without a shepherd, fainting for hunger at the head of every street, and panting after the green pastures and pleasant waterbrooks of the preached gospel: And yet scared, and made to stand aloof from it by the stumblings, tentations, defections and divisions of these unhappy times past; which as it hath been our greatest sorrow, so no comfort on this side heaven could be so desirable as to re-enjoy and recover again access with clearness to pure and powerful gospel-ordinances, without which we shall never have a pleasant day, in the greatest abundance of all our outward peace.

It was, *right reverend*, a reproach heavy to bear, that we were called despisers of the gospel and of the ministry thereof,

thereof, which yet, so far as we had clearness and access, we sought after and followed even upon the hazard of our lives, so that no terror of persecutors could hinder us from the pursuit of it. And nothing moved us to withdraw from these ministers who counted themselves rejected by us, but their sad involvements in the defections of the late defiling time, seeing no other way left us in that broken state of keeping up a testimony against the same, or to free ourselves from partaking in the sin thereof, but abstraction;—which we never looked upon as separation from the reformed, covenanted church of Scotland, (as is more fully shewed in our *Informatory Vindication*, which we homologate) but only from the defections of many of her members; for schism ever was and is equally hateful to us, as sinful union. And we are, and were always most willing to join again in terms pleasing to the Lord, edifying to the church, and satisfying to our consciences. We are not for imposing terms or prescribing rules to ministers, more than we are to be imposed upon and led by them; yet seeing people are allowed of the Lord sometimes in sobriety to say to Archippus, *Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, and fulfil it.* And when offences are given by ministers, it is people's privilege to plead for the removing of them in a Christian way, to the satisfaction of the offended party. We humbly conceive, in order to the removal of these many offences given and taken in this our day, in order to our comfortable reconciliation together, and that we may be reconciled to the Lord and his wrath turned away, that confessing, forsaking and condemning the courses that have been so offensive, is very necessary; and seeing a door is opened, whereby ye have access and capacity to build and cleanse the temple of the Lord of these filthinesses wherewith in the time past it hath been defiled, and removing these stumbling-blocks which have offended the consciences of many tender serious people—Therefore, in all humility and reverence, we must take the freedom to represent to this revd. Assembly, in a few particulars, what chiefly hath humbled us, and occasioned our withdrawing from many ministers of this church, which we cannot omit to complain of, and protest against, neither designing hereby to irritate, or lay the faults of any open to the world, nor to plead our own innocence, but desiring to acknowledge our deep accession also to the sins

which have provoked the Lord to all this anger against this church and kingdom; and that the remembering of them may help us all to the sight and sense of these sins,—that we may mourn for them and testify against them, and to shew our desire of having peace and truth, unity and order among all the lovers of Zion, settled upon a solid foundation,—and communion in ordinances restored to us, who have been long driven away from that benefit by these offences.

As it was not a little affecting to behold, so it is no pleasure to remember, that when Prelacy (condemned in the word of God and abjured by our covenants) was established, many ministers did hear and join with these perjured hirelings and intruders, yea, and persuaded others to the like practice; whereby their hands were strengthened, and many of the godly were stumbled.—We are grieved that this joining and complying therewith is not yet condemned, nor the practice of those who withdrew, approved.

As it was no small grief of heart to see the supremacy which belongs only to the Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his church, given away to a miserable mortal, and settled upon him by laws; so it was an augmentation of our sorrow to see an indulgence flowing therefrom, clogged with restrictions very prejudicial to the honour and freedom of Christ's ambassadors; embraced by several ministers, and justified by others, which did much strengthen these wicked usurpations on our Lord's crown-rights and his church's liberties, and gave great occasion of offence and contention among the Lord's people in this land;—the sin whereof is not confessed and condemned; the doing whereof, we are persuaded, would be very contributive to the turning away of the Lord's anger, and satisfying all offended.

It was very offensive to us, when many snares and temptations were going through the land, that then many ministers who should have preached in season and out of season, and when no dispensation could discharge them from that necessary duty, did not set the trumpet to their mouth to give faithful warning in times of such danger, as became watchmen; but though often called to preach in the country, *did either faintly leave the land,* or lurked and lay by in the land, and others when they preached, either did not apply their doctrine to the times, so as we might take it up, or were ambiguous in
their

their application of their doctrine to the dangers of the times ; whereby many were left to perish in their iniquity, and the hands of these who were endeavouring to keep clean garments were not strengthened. Yea, it was very offensive to see the practice of some ministers, who instead of strengthening their hands who were at that time most zealously appearing and contending for the interest and cause of Christ, and joining with, countenancing or encouraging the ministers who were valiant for the truth, and jeoparded their lives in the high places of the fields for the testimony of Christ, did condemn their laudable endeavours, and reproached them and their actings and sufferings, both at home and abroad.

More especially it was sad and humbling to us, when many mischiefs were framed into laws by a throne of iniquity, when many wicked oaths and bonds (contrary to the word of God and our national covenants) were imposed, and when many were required upon pain of death to *own the authority of, and acknowledge allegiance to tyrants and usurpers* as our lawful magistrates whom God had set over us as his ministers of justice ; that then many ministers did comply with these wicked laws, and taught the people to obey them, and some did take and subscribe these oaths and bonds themselves, and persuaded people to take them, and not only *owned and acknowledged allegiance* to these tyrants and usurpers, prayed for them and their government, and pleaded for the lawfulness of their authority, yea some prayed for the pretended Prince of Wales ; but instead of sympathizing with the sufferings of those that could not in conscience own that authority, condemned and inveighed against them as fools, and dying in an error.—We wish that such untender carriage towards conscientious sufferers were reſented, and the heads and causes upon which these reproached martyrs and confessors suffered, were approved and justified.

It was very burdensom to our consciences, that a Popish toleration designed to introduce Popery into this land again, granted by K. James, from his absolute power which he blasphemously arrogated to himself, and whereby he presumed to stop the penal laws against Papists, and clogged with many limitations, was embraced by many Presbyterian ministers, and addressed for to that Popish usurper in name of all : Which many of the

godly of the land looked upon with weeping eyes as a sad step of defection from the wonted zeal of the ministers of Scotland. The sin and scandal of this course is evident in a testimony given in against the same by some ministers which we here own. Yet now,—though the wicked power it flowed from be removed, we cannot think the sin and scandal of it is taken away, so long as the same is not confessed, mourned over, and condemned.

The condemning of all these courses of compliance and defection would not only be as a beacon set up to hinder the following generations from splitting on such dangerous rocks; but also will make our uniting with those (which we long for) cordial and comfortable.

We are also dissatisfied and offended at several things at present.—The practice of these ministers continues to be very offensive and stumbling, who instead of confessing and condemning these defections, and minding the people of their former backslidings, and discovering the sins of the late times that were many and heinous, to the end that they may be induced to mourn over them, and turn to the Lord; do yet continue to defend and hide their sin, and thereby harden others in impenitency: So that the wrongs done to Christ are like to be forgotten, and few are like to be brought from the evil of their ways by a real repentance.

We are also much discouraged and dissatisfied, that the *national* and the *Solemn League and Covenants* have not only not been renewed, but not mentioned by many; the affront done to them, and their binding force not declared, but like to be buried in oblivion. And more especially, it was wounding to us to hear, that when opportunity was, and access to address the King and Parliament, the mentioning of these solemn covenants was omitted. And since the King and Queen were advanced to the throne, we fear that such faithfulness and freedom hath not been used as was wont to be in former times, to warn and admonish their Majesties of the sins and snares of the throne, to beware of evil counsellors, and of the guilt and danger of tampering with, and patronizing Prelacy in England and Ireland, nor to discover and declare to them and the parliament, the sin and danger of bringing into, and keeping in places of power and trust, in judicatories and armies, persons who are known malignants, enemies to truth and godliness
and

and to their present interest, as faithful ministers in former times used to witness against such sinful associations: *And after all this is come upon us for our evil deeds*, and have gotten such a deliverance as this, if again his commandments be broken by joining in affinity with the people of these abominations, it will be more than ever dangerous both to king and kingdom.

Likewise, we cannot conceal our sorrow, that the great and glorious attainments, betwixt the year 1638, and 1649. being years of the right hand of the Most High, in which we were brought under the renewed bond of Solemn Covenants, are not revived, nor any honourable mention made of them, in any of the acts establishing the privileges of the church, which we think a losing of the ground which our fathers gained. We do not say that it was in the power of ministers to redress this,—yet we conceive, the pleading for the full of this, in their addresses, was not above their power, and that they should have signified their dissatisfaction at the want thereof.—So in our poor judgments, we think in all establishments of religion, and religious rights in a land, respect is always to be had to the pattern and rule of God's revealed will in his word, and not to the inclinations of men, and their worldly politicks.

It is also very discouraging and offensive, and we cannot but complain of it, that now when there is an opportunity to purge the church from these corruptions wherewith she hath been long pestered and plagued: Yet (though Prelacy be abolished by the state, and many Curates put away, some one way, some another) we hear of none censured, and removed for prelacy, perjury, and intrusion, and some ministers are also pleading for keeping them in, upon carnal and politic grounds, who we fear may afterwards do more mischief, than the good now pretended can countervail: And that if this occasion be lost, of purging the church of insufficient, corrupt, and scandalous officers of all sorts, especially of prelatick Curates, and of planting it with godly and faithful ministers, we may all repent of it too late.

More especially, it is very stumbling and offensive to us, that albeit there be an opportunity, without fear and danger, to exercise discipline impartially and faithfully; yet some who have formerly taken the abominable Test, and are guilty of other gross scandals, are admitted to be officers of the church, some to be ministers, and some

to be elders, and many guilty of very gross degrees of compliance, are admitted to the sacraments, without any public acknowledgment of their offences, whereby they and others are hardened, and many of the godly stumbled, to the disadvantage of the church.

To conclude, Right Reverend, we expect, and intreat that ye will not be offended at our freedom in what we here represent; but our meaning and end being to have differences satisfyingly removed, will move you to put a favourable construction thereupon.—But tho' we should be condemned and censured with the greatest severity, we must seek, we must cry for the removing of these stumbling blocks, and condemning these courtes, which have done our Lord Jesus so much wrong, and his children so much hurt, in their standing in the way of their comfortable communion with the church: Let the famishing starving case of our souls, thro' the want of the blessed gospel, and our hungering to hear it preached by you, prevail with you to consider our complaints, and let the wounds of our bleeding mother, panting to be healed by the hand of the tender physician have weight with you, not to slight or despise our desires: But if ye shall shut your eyes, and ears at them, then we know no other remedy left us, but to complain, and protest unto judicatories, and cry, sigh, and groan to the Father of mercies, who is tender of all his little ones, and is the hearer of prayer, that he may see to it, and heal our backslidings, and breaches in his own time and way, and not lay it to our charge, that ye have had so little regard to the stumbling and saddening of so many of his poor broken, bruised and scattered sheep, and that ye have not had greater care to strengthen the diseased, and to heal that which was sick, and to bind up that which was broken, and to bring again that which was driven away; and to seek that which was lost.

UPON Tuesday, October 28th, The five men, fore-said, went into the *New-kirk*, in order to get these papers delivered in to the Committee of Overtures then sitting, that by them the same might be transmitted to the whole Assembly, where meeting with two ministers, Mr. John Stuart, and Mr. Alexander Forbes, with whom they had some conference concerning the papers they were entrusted to deliver. Mr. Alexander Forbes told them, that before they could expect to have a hearing, they

they beſeved to ſubſcribe a ſubmiſſion to the church. To this it was answered, that being come there, not in their own name, but in the name of many others, from whom they had a commiſſion only to preſent to the Aſſembly two papers, and to get their anſwer thereto; ſo they could not anſwer what was propoſed.

He replied, ſeeing they had no power to do that, or any ſuch like thing that might be thought expedient, there could not be a committee appointed to treat with them about their papers. But Mr. Stuart ſaid they would go in to the committee (whereof they were members) and if conveniency allowed would acquaint them of it; accordingly they having informed the committee thereof, who nominate two miniſters, *viz.* Mr. Gabriel Semple, and Mr. James Frazer, with a ruling elder, the ſaird of Glanderſtoun, to confer with the men, who immediately came out, and went with the men to a corner of the kirk, where Mr. Lining and Mr. Shields came alſo. Mr. Shields being deſired, read firſt the ſhort paper. After hearing of it, they ſaid there was no reaſon to complain of what it did, ſeeing our miniſters were tenderly dealt with, for notwithstanding their paper to the Aſſembly was long, yet the committee had the patience to hear it, and the reaſon wherefore it was not read in open Aſſembly, was, that if the ſame had been done, ſeveral members of the Aſſembly would have riſen in a heat at it, and likewiſe there were many Gilli-Crankie blades waiting on, who if they had heard any thing like a debate in the Aſſembly, would have preſently ſpread it abroad that the Aſſembly were all by the ears amongſt themſelves.

Next the long paper was read, which being done, the five men were deſired to go aſide a little until the miniſters and elder had ſpoken among themſelves concerning it; after which Mr. ——— came to the men, ſaying there were three things in the paper which they deſired might be helped, *viz.* they ſaid there was ſomething antiſcriptural in it, which was concerning miniſters leaving the land.

2. Owning the authority mentioned therein, which belonged not to the church to cognoſce upon, but to the ſtate.

3. As to the Solemn League, mentioned in it, They ſaid the church of Scotland could not own a league with the church of England, in the ſtate wherein it did at preſent ſtand. To all which they deſired an anſwer. To

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which the men said, they had no commission to reason or debate about any thing in the paper with any person, or to alter any thing in it, but to solicit the reading of it in the Assembly, and to receive their answer thereunto, the two ministers had a long discourse to them which cannot be remembered; the scope of it was, shewing that the committee had shewed much tenderness to them, in appointing them to converse with them about their papers, which they had heard read and had spoken about the same; that as their paper was little different from our minister's paper; so what was done about it, might satisfy them; saying they had sufficiently exonerated themselves by giving in the paper, which was read, and some conference about it; so it was needless for them to trouble themselves any more with the same, but report to their friends what they had done.

To this answer was returned, That this would not be taken by their friends as the Assembly's answer to their paper, and therefore they behaved still to seek to have it read in the Assembly, and desire to have their answer to the same.

To which the ministers replied, that the paper being very little different from our ministers paper, there was no need of reading it in the Assembly; and desired the men to be tender of the church's peace, and to do nothing that might tend to the renting of it; also they said, *As ye have somewhat against us, so we have somewhat against you; forgive ye us, and we will forgive you, and so let us unite.*

To this the men said, That they could do nothing in their friends name without their consent; and they had no other commission but to deliver the paper to the Assembly, to desire the same to be read, and to get somewhat in answer thereunto. Then the ministers said, they would represent that to the committee. Accordingly one of them went in and delivered the papers to the clerk.

Upon the 29th day of *October*, they met with one of the ministers, who began a discourse on several things, but the men would enter on no debates, but insisted for a hearing to the paper, from which he dissuaded them, and advised them to converse with Mr. Thomas Hog; which they did, other two also being present. They insisted much against that concerning ministers leaving the land, which they said could not be condemned in
time

time of suffering. To this it was said, that the leaving the land as they took it, was not so much complained of, as that the ministers generally lay by from the duty of giving faithful warning in time of snares and dangers, and that was one way whereby ministers deserted people at that time to perish in the midst of snares. Mr. — shewed that the same reason for which our ministers paper was not read, was the reason why ours could not be read. After much time and talk had passed they dismissed.

Upon the 30th of October the men went to Mr. Frazer, and desired of him that he would endeavour to get their affair dispatched; he willed to know what they would have him doing, they told him as formerly. Again he enquired what answer would satisfy them. They answered, if the Assembly would determine that these things complained of in the paper should be doctrinally acknowledged, and an act condemning the same. This (he said) he would as willingly be at, as they, only he feared it would not be done; but yet (he said) there were some things complained of, which could not be acknowledged and instanced the things before related.

The next day meeting at Mr. —'s quarters with three ministers, they desired to see the papers, one of them having read the short paper, was dissatisfied therewith, saying there was something in it which reflected upon the Assembly for not reading our ministers paper. The men replied, there was reason to mention all that was in it, seeing the Assembly voted the not reading the paper upon the overture of the committee, which was, that there were gross mistakes, peremptory overtures and injurious reflections upon godly ministers in it, which seemed to condemn it before it was heard. He answered tho' it was not read in the Assembly, yet it was read in the Committee of Overtures. After much discourse the ministers expected that the men should have gone away, but they still urged that they might have some answer from the Assembly, to return to these who had sent them. After the ministers had spoken among themselves, they said to the men that they would give it under their hands, to testify the diligence they had been at, but to this the men replied as before. Then the ministers said they would do what they could for a more satisfying answer to them.

Having parted at this time, and meeting afterwards with one of these ministers, he told them that they were ordered by the Assembly to give it to them in writing, what was done concerning their paper. Which was accordingly done, and subscribed.

A true Copy of which follows.

Loving Friends,

THE Papers you gave in to the Assembly, were first given into the Committee of Overtures, and we were appointed by them to confer with you: And after conference with you, we moved in the Committee that the Assembly would order the papers to be given in to these who were to draw up the Monitory Letter, and Causes of the Fast, that they might make their own use thereof in drawing up the same, which at the first next session of the Assembly, on Saturday last the first of Nov. was accordingly done in open Assembly, and we are by the Assembly allowed to report the same to you, which accordingly we do.

And we hope this will satisfy you, and others who did commisionate you. And that the Lord will incline your hearts to peace, and to guard against any further rent in the church of God; and in this hope we subscribe ourselves,

Your Friends, and Servants in the Lord,

Sic Subscribitur,

EDINBURGH, }
Nov. 3d, 1690. }

PAT. WARNER;
JAMES FRAZER,
ALEX. FORBES.

THE greatest thing that occurred in this interval was the sitting of the General Assembly which met 16th of October, and upon the 13th of November was dissolved (by the King's Commissioner) at which time another was indicted to be upon November 1st, 1691. The union and submission to this Assembly offered and subscribed by Messrs Lining, Shields and Boyd, occasioned much talk, and was approved by some, and disapproved by others. But as an account of it is now published it is unnecessary here; so it is as needless to relate the management of the paper given in by the people. A short hint
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which is already given; only it may be observed that the paper containing their complaints, and humble desires, was given in order to the removing of differences, and grounds of withdrawing, that so they might unite with the more freedom, and have more comfort of the same. But the answer returned was not as was desired, and might have been expected. And the refusing to read it in open Assembly hath created scruples and jealousies, and not a little retarded union.

As it was agreed upon at Edinburgh, a General Meeting met at *Douglas*, the 3d of December, 1690.—After prayer, &c. it was thought fittest, first to have an account of the diligence of the men intrusted with the paper to the Assembly.—William Swanstoun one of the five, gave the Meeting a particular account of the whole management, as is hinted above. The Meeting having heard the relation, were dissatisfied with the answer returned, and did not look upon the same as sufficient.—Afterward Messrs. Lining and Shields shewed the Meeting how they had united (an account of which is now printed). This being done, after some reasoning, and debate, concerning union, it was thought fit to read the Causes of the Fast appointed by the Assembly, in respect that many times it was said, we would get satisfaction to our scruples from it. Which being heard, the same was thought lame, and many things wanting in it, which were causes of wrath: It was dissatisfying not only that the Test and Declaration, were not in it, but being once in, were put out again*.

After this, Messrs Lining and Shields, spoke to the Meeting, to this effect, That they would not impose upon any person, yet they advised them to hear those ministers who were most free and faithful, that they could have the opportunity of, and to have a care of running upon extremes on the right hand.—After which some debates ensued.

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* These two, were the most openly wicked oaths, of any that were imposed in that period, as thereby the Reformation in 1638 was declared rebellion, the covenants were abjured, and all self-defence by subjects, or petitioning, and remonstrating of grievances were owned to be treason, and the king's ecclesiastic authority fully recognized.

Whereupon it was proposed to the meeting that a paper should be drawn up, containing a Protestation against the defections of the ministers they were to hear, (which they might give in either to the minister with whom they were to join, or to the Presbytery of the bounds) and what induced them to join at the time; as also, that their joining at present, *was neither a condemning of, nor receding from our former testimony and contentings, nor approving of these defections they witnessed against before.*

Some were for such a paper, and some were against it, fearing it would open a door, and give a latitude to hear every minister. However the most part were for the writing of it in order to see it, and the ministers undertook to do it. They parted for that night.

Upon the morrow they convened again. The said paper was presented and read; but there were debates concerning the same between our ministers and some of the meeting. As also, the Meeting were of different sentiments about it, some against it upon one account, and some upon another account, and some were for it, thinking it better to join with such a testimony than without any at all. Not coming to any agreement, it was left to people's liberty and freedom to give it or not, as they thought fit. However the ministers insisted for it. It was proposed to the meeting, That in regard debates did not much good, but rather hurt, it was fittest to leave them off, and part;—which (after appointing a meeting at *Douglas*, the first Wednesday of *April*, and prayer) they did. Some staid and took copies of the paper, which they gave in to ministers before they joined; a transcript of which follows.

*To the right reverend Minister and Eldership of the Parish
of ——— or Presbytery of ———*

ALTHOUGH among other calamities that we have been exercised with in these days of tribulation that have gone over us, these have been very grievous unto us, that not only we have laboured under a sad famine of gospel-ordinances, but under the reproach that we despised and rejected the offer of them: Yet we have a witness in heaven, and in our own consciences, that nothing hath been more lamented in our lot than the want of such a privilege, nor any thing so much desired as
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The recovery and enjoyment of these ordinances, administered in freedom and faithfulness, purity and power, which for a long time; in our judgment, have been so restrained and restricted, burdened and borne down under the bushel of Erastian and Antichristian usurpations, that not only they wanted that liberty, light and lustre, which the Lord Jesus had set them in by his institutions, but seemed to be encompassed with and subjected to these wicked encroachments that we could not have access to them without some way acknowledging and bowing unto these idols of jealousy, which being set up in the very entry of the house of the Lord, did fear and fright us from coming thereunto, so long as these usurpations were standing. But now these being removed, and the church's freedom and power restored, the doctrine, worship, discipline and government, and all the ordinances of Christ re-established in purity, peace and freedom, we cannot any longer stand at a distance from them.—Nevertheless, the indignities done to our Lord Jesus, and injuries done to his church by these Erastian and Antichristian usurpations of Prelacy, Supremacy and absolute power; and the defections of ministers in compliance therewith not being as yet confessed nor condemned, and our complaints and petitions offered to the late General Assembly, not being received nor regarded as we expected, which was a great grievance, and an addition to all our former complaints;—and yet being resolved to remain no longer in withdrawing as formerly, we think it altogether needful for our own exoneration, and for making our communion the more comfortable, and free of all accession to, or partaking with the guilt of these offences, which made us withdraw in former times; To offer and give in our testimony against all the wrongs done to Christ and this reformed covenanted church of Scotland, by the Popish, Prelatical and malignant faction, in their wicked overturning its blessed ancient reformation, rescinding the righteous laws, and breaking, burning and burying the holy covenants that fenced it, and establishing upon the ruins thereof abjured Prelacy, supremacy and tyranny, and by all the defections of ministers in compliance with, or submission to the same; such as, hearing of curates, taking any of the oaths and bonds repugnant to the covenants, embracing the indulgences and indemnities of tyrants, addressing for, and accepting of the late Popish toleration,

A N A P P E N D I X.

AS Michael Shields hath in the foregoing relation frequently made mention of division and debates in their meetings, and hath related how matters were carried on by the ministers and the majority of the people, (of which number he was one) but hath been sparing in giving account of the grounds upon which the minor party went in opposition to the several parts of their managements in the two last years, (*viz.* 1689 & 1690) so it is supposed that it will be acceptable to many of the readers, and that it can justly give offence to none, to give here a brief relation, in their own words, of the reasons wherefore a considerable number of the society people did dissent from and protest against the measures that were then followed; and as this will set the controversies of that time in a more clear light, and give the reader a more full view, and an opportunity to judge whether the major or minor party in their conduct were most consonant to, and consistent with their former principles and practices while they were united; so it may contribute not a little to help the candid and impartial reader to judge of the future progress and prosecution of these debates and divisions that have since ensued, the foundation of which was then laid; and there is a special connection with, and dependance that every thing hath upon its foundation: as that is good or bad, so will the superstructure readily be; so in this also.

Although the reasons of their dissent be published long ago in their declarations emitted at Sanquhar, in 1692, 1695, 1703, &c. and also in the Informatory Vindication, second edition, P. 213 to 223; yet as the same is more fully demonstrated and corroborated from scripture and acts of General Assemblies and Parliaments, in some steps of defection drawn up and agreed upon by a society in Tinnald, with the assistance of Sir Robert Hamilton, &c. and by them sent to societies in several
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shires who dissented from the measures then followed, in the year 1691. in order to gather them together again into a General Correspondence; which paper was further enlarged afterward; a brief summary of which it is supposed will not be unacceptable to the reader, together with some account of these matters, given by a few of those old men who overlived the persecution in their dying testimonies; especially as these foresaid declarations, &c. are not at hand to every one who may desire information in these things.

A brief abstract of which paper here follows.

WE—being refreshed to hear that any of our suffering brethren are consulting how we may take up (in the Lord's strength) our former ground again, after all our confusions, wanderings, declinings and sad distempers, partly occasioned by the fatal endeavours of Messrs. Thomas Lining, Alexander Shields and William Boyd, and their accomplices, who ceased not since the arrival of the Prince of Orange by insinuations, misrepresentations, and much subtilty and under-hand-dealing, to withdraw us from our former testimony and principles into an association, union, and concurrence with such as our magistrates, against whom our covenants were made, and with their judicatories thus compacted;—and also into a sinful union with backslidden ministers and their corrupt Assemblies, while not only guilty of many scandalous compliances, but vindicating and going on in their former practices, so far as occasion offers, and their ecclesiastic courts (for most part) being composed of persons, who by the constitutions of this church, ought not to be admitted as judges even in the lowest of her judicatories.

Although it be matter of grief and fore regret, that we have it to say, that these three forementioned men have had such an hand in our late strayings and present miseries; yet they alone have not been the cause of it, but we ourselves by our great and manifold sins have provoked the Lord in his just and righteous judgments to make it our plague, and to punish us with such unfaithfulness and unstedfastness in these men, making them in many things snares and traps to us, and by the most politic indirect dealing imaginable, to draw us from these things formerly taught us by themselves, whereby

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many of us have not only been left to walk in our own crooked ways and counsels, and to be a prey to our malignant bloody enemies, and subtle, embittered, back-siden antagonists; but our own strength is broken, our hearts faint, our hands are weakened, the godly grieved and stumbled, enemies on the right and left hand hardened and strengthened, and the precious cause of Christ betrayed, and the name of our God blasphemed, and his way evil spoken of:—Yet, we say, we are not a little revived and refreshed in our sad case to hear of any consulting if again we might be honoured, in the Lord's strength, to take up our former ground again, and after all our wanderings to return to our first Husband:—Whereupon we determined, after some time seeking the Lord's council in it, to send some of our brethren with our mind unto you, if possibly we might be strengthened of one another; with a commission to consult, consent and concur in whatever may be for the raising up and carrying on of our former testimony in all its parts and pendicles, and to protest against, disown and discountenance whatever may be found contradictory, or any way prejudicial to the same; and for the more safe going about of this, we earnestly intreat, that before any thing be concluded, we may begin where we left off, that is, in setting days apart in humbling ourselves, and mourning for our many wanderings and provocations, and casting our sad, dark and dead case before the Lord, and waiting and imploring him for his reconciled countenance with light and life, to bring us out of our deplorable condition, and to guide and assist us in all our motions and managements in prosecuting what is our present duty; For since our neglecting and slighting of this duty (in many of our meetings the two years past) we have never stept a right step, nor been able to withstand the smallest temptation, and all attempts of recovery have been broken in our hands.

None of us need be ignorant what subtle ways both the enemies without, with their false alarms, and those within (particularly the three foresaid men, with their accomplices) have taken to hurry, and precipitantly to involve us in their backslidings, without giving us time to consult either God and our own consciences, or one another.—And that we may not be strangers to one another's minds, we shall here give you some of the causes of the Lord's wrath, or steps of defection, most re-

lative (as we judge) to the present testimony. We have no freedom to diminish or refile from the matter here condescended on, especially in these articles relative to our former stated testimonies ; neither to join in fellowship or constituted meetings with any who are, or have been involved in, or pleading for any of the old or late defections, except our consciences be satisfied by their positive condemning and testifying their resentment of the same before God and the world, by their real forsaking these defections, and taking up our former ground and testimony, relative both to magistrates and ministers, against right and left hand errors and opposers. As this was our former practice while jointly carrying on the public work, and wherein the Lord was graciously pleased to own us, — and here we resolve, in the Lord's strength, to stand, though alone, till he plead the controversy of Zion, vindicate his own cause and people, for *wisdom will be justified of her children.*

First, Some of us shamefully suffering ourselves to be led away with Mr. Boyd in that sinful act in being among the first in the nation that proclaimed the Declaration of the Prince of Orange, and to own it as the state of our quarrel, who was matched to a daughter of the bloody Popish Duke of York, educated in the family of her uncle Charles, and ever since adhered to these abjured, prelatiic principles ; — and while he is associated with all the Popish and bloody enemies abroad, (France and his associates only excepted) yea, even that ravenous eagle, the Tyrant of Austria, who is the Pope's general, while swimming in the blood of the Protestants of Hungary ; and with that old devouring leviathan, the King of Spain ; and now also with that little tyger of Savoy : Likewise his unconcernedness these many years with the overturning of the work of God in these lands, until his own interest was touched, and till called and encouraged by the stated enemies and very actors of our sad catastrophe, and he being bound to the same persons in the same designs in his Declaration for Scotland ; whereby a wide breach is broken through the very vitals of our sacred covenants and solemn engagements, and our noble reformation, for the introduction of all the enemies thereof, and that upon their bare assisting of him, and casting off the friends thereof, — In which declaration, shewing the reason of his appearing

pearing in arms in this kingdom, he states himself in an opposition to the covenants and solemn engagements of the three kingdoms, and labours therein to bury every part of our testimony, viz.

1st, Our testimony against King James VII. (so called) for paragraph 5th, he says, "It is also manifest and notorious, that His Majesty (King James) was, upon his coming to the crown, received and acknowledged by all the subjects of Scotland, England and Ireland, without the least opposition, tho' he made open profession of the Popish religion, &c."

2^{dly}, Our testimony against all oaths contrary to our covenants; for *ibidem*, and elsewhere in it, he declares it to be a ground of his undertaking, The breach of the oaths of Allegiance, Supremacy and Test."

3^{dly}, Our testimony against Prelacy the daughter of Popery; for besides the foresaid oaths, he declares through his whole declaration, that his undertaking as it was at the instigation of the reverend fathers in God, the Lords Spiritual, (as he calls them) so it was for the maintenance of the (Prelatic) church of England."

5^{thly}, Our testimony against toleration; for paragraph 4th, he promises such laws for covering and securing all such as will live peaceably under the government — from all persecution upon the account of their religion," even Papists themselves not excepted.

5^{thly}, Our testimony against promiscuous associations; for in the end of his declaration, he invites all persons, all Peers of the realm, both spiritual and temporal; all lords lieutenants; all gentlemen, citizens and commons of all ranks to assist."

By espousing of which declaration, as we relinquished our former testimony, so it was also contrary to the law of God, Deut. xvii. 14, 15. 2 Chron. xix. 2. and contrary to the act of the Gen. Assembly, 1647. sess. 15th, and the declaration of the Gen. Assembly, 1648, and contrary to several acts of parliament, particularly act 15th, Feb. 7th, 1649. A

Second step of defection, and cause of mourning was that many of us were so far prevailed upon by the subtle draughts, and fair pretences of the above named three ministers, and our own sin and folly, to come to Lesmahagow, in order to renew our covenants, &c.—Where-

by instead of turning us unto the Lord, they laboured most deceitfully to turn us from the most part of our Testimony, and to set us in the way back again to Egypt bringing us again under obedience and subjection unto the old bloody perjured enemies of Christ, his cause and people (whom formerly we had justly rejected) who had made an act that all who had served in the army under the late popish tyrant should lay down their arms, and enlist again under the prelatie banner of the prince of Orange, with assurance that they should be paid their arrears: Thus the bloody butchers were justified in all that they had done, and declared capable of trust.

As also they induced some of us to take up arms, and march into Edinburgh to guard the foresaid bloody men, in a Convention of Estates (so called) together with the prime ring-leaders, favourers, and followers of the indulged and tolerated party; where to our sin and shame we were prevailed upon to stay until the foresaid enemies, with their accomplices had established themselves again in the government, and the exercise of it; and had made choice of the Prince and Princess of Orange to be their King and Queen, and had proclaimed him King over this Covenanted Land; and had authorized some of their number (particularly Sir John Dalrymple who had a principal hand in shedding the precious blood of great and worthy Mr. James Renwick) who was sent to present to them the offer of the crown of Scotland, and their admission to the exercise of the government, notwithstanding of many discoveries of their stated opposition to the work of God (mentioned article 1st.) and their being at the same time crowned and anointed King and Queen in England, and admitted to the exercise of government there, according to all the English popish ceremonies, and upon their solemn oath upon their knees before the altar, with the book in their hand (according to the Coronation Oath administered to them by the Archbishop of Canterbury). "To defend and protect
 "the laws, customs, and liberties of the present Church
 "of England, conferred upon her by the laws of their
 "religious predecessors, especially by their glorious pre-
 "decessor King St. Edward, according to the law of
 "God (thus acknowledging Prelacy of divine right)
 "and the true profession of the gospel, firmly establish-
 "ed in this kingdom, and all the Canonical privileges
 "of the bishops, and the churches under their govern-
 "ment,

“ment, &c.”—And upon these terms the bishops, nobility, and gentry sware allegiance to them. Yet nevertheless he is invested with the crown and government of this covenanted land by our pretended representatives (or rather by many of the murderers) who had many ways forefaulted all right to rule or to choose a king over the land and people of the Lord, which they had so long persecuted, and for which we had long since justly rejected them, with all their associates, being without these necessary qualifications, *viz.* of known integrity, approved fidelity, constant affection, and zeal to the cause of God, which the word of God, and our solemn and inviolable covenant engagements, and acts of parliament require in all judges superior or inferior. Among many others that might be quoted, see Deut. xvii. 14, 15. Exod. xviii. 21, —25. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4. Neh. vii. 2. and xiii. 3. As also several acts of parliament, particularly Act 5th, June 11th, 1640. Act 15th, Feb. 4th, 1649. Wherein they enact, ordain, and declare, “that before the King’s Majesty who now is, or any of his successors, shall be admitted to the exercise of his royal power, he shall by, and at our the foresaid (Coronation) Oath assure, and declare by his solemn oath, under his hand and seal, his allowance of the National and Solemn League and Covenant, and obligation to prosecute the same in his station and calling, and that he shall for himself and his successors consent and agree to acts of parliament enjoining the same,—and that he shall never make opposition to these.—It is also declared, enacted, and ordained, that before the King be admitted to the exercise of the royal power, he shall leave all counsel and counsellors prejudicial to religion and the covenants,” &c. and Act 18th, Jan. 23d, 1649. Wherein they say, “And whereas the Estates of Parliament, are convinced in their conscience, from the word of God, from their Solemn League and Covenant, especially from the 2d, 4th, and 5th Articles thereof, and from sad and dear bought experience, that the malignaut dealing of some, and the prophane loose walking of others who have been members of judicatories, and employed in places of power and trust, have been a chief cause of all the evils, both of sin and punishment, under which the land groans, and that the Lord in his word, requires, that those who judge, and bear charge among his people, should

“ not

“ not only be able men, but such as fear God, hate co-
 “ vetousness, and deal truly; and that it is of special
 “ importance, for the remedy of all our evils, and for
 “ securing and advancing religion and righteousness,—
 “ for removing the judgments of God,—and for pro-
 “ curing the blessing of God through the whole land,
 “ that men not only of known ability, but also of ap-
 “ proven integrity, and constant affection to the cause,
 “ and of a good and Christian conversation, be intrusted
 “ in all judicatories, and places of power and trust, ac-
 “ cording to the seventh desire of the Commissioners of
 “ the church given in to the last Parliament, &c. There-
 “ fore the Estates of Parliament remembering well the
 “ laudable precedent of the Parliaments 1641 and 1646,
 “ and several others for purgation of the judicatories and
 “ places of trust.—They do in pursuance of their so-
 “ lemn acknowledgment, performance of their vows to
 “ God, declaration emitted to the world, and for sa-
 “ tisfying the Kirk’s just desires, for purgation and re-
 “ formation of our Judicatories;—The Estates of Par-
 “ liament upon these, and many other great and weigh-
 “ ty considerations,—therefore declare, enact, and or-
 “ dain, that all the officers of state,—members of parlia-
 “ ment,—committees,—secret council,—session,—justice
 “ courts, &c. &c.—who were guilty of any of the
 “ faults contained in the four classes after mentioned,
 “ shall be removed and secluded from public trust.”—
 See also the act of the General Assembly, session 13th,
 June 17th, 1646. and July 20th, 1649.

By all which it is evident that it is contrary to the
 law of God, and to the laws of this land, that either
 men of no religion, or of a false religion should be cho-
 sen to be ruler or magistrate in a reformed covenanted
 land, nor owned as such; the very light of nature teach-
 es all nations in the world to provide that none have a
 right to rule over them who are of a different religion
 from what is established amongst them; and the Prelat-
 tick church of England are very circumspect in this.
 And if the Parliament, and the General Assembly had
 just cause in the year 1649, the one by the act of Clas-
 ses, to put out of office, and the other ecclesiastically to
 censure these who joined and assisted in the engagement
 (in 1643.) for K. Charles I. his restoration: How much
 more was there just cause to degrade and censure those
 who

who for twenty-eight years had assisted the two tyrants to oppress, persecute, and murder thousands of the best subjects?

Thirdly, Our suffering ourselves to be so far prevailed upon as to be hurried upon so great a work, as the renewing of our Covenants, Acknowledgment of Sins, &c. without taking time to consider the great work we were going about, whereby these three men got opportunity to stuff some things into our acknowledgment, as sins, which we did, and still do judge to be our duty: As also mentioning some things in ambiguous terms, whereby they might afterward explain it as they pleased, particularly in that article concerning the magistrate*, they now impudently averr that we espoused the interest of the prince, and that we appropriated and applied that article in the National Covenant concerning the King to his highness, if he should be called to the government: whereas there is nothing more false, and several things do they now most falsely assert.

A *Fourth* step of defection, and cause of mourning, was our sinful tampering with these three foresaid men, and others with them, disaffected to the cause of God, and our stated testimony anent the raising of a regiment, under the conduct of William Clelland, one of Argyle's officers; who, though once one with us, yet was afterward a great opposer of our testimony and a reproacher of great Mr. James Renwick, and our faithful brethren, both at home, and abroad: Whereby a great part of us were ensnared into a sinful and scandalous association in war, with all the perjured, murdering, backsliden, and apostate enemies of Christ, both at home, and abroad
(France

* In another paper intitled Steps of Defection, they say there "was no such thing heard or understood, before, or at that time by the bulk or body of the well meaning people who were then present, and swore the covenant, for the administrator (Mr. Lining) expressly declared, that as they then took it, that they meant magistracy in the general, and had no prospect to any in particular, but such only as according to the covenant they could own, when it should please the Lord to grant us such. — Whereby the people were cheated and deceived." — It is observable that the printed copy differs from the subscribed roll in some places, and many of these who subscribed it that night, and had no time to read it again, did not fully understand it, neither had they ever opportunity to see it afterward, as it was in Mr. Lining's custody until his death.

(France and his associates, only excepted) * contrary to Deut. xxiii. 9,—14. 2 Chron. xviii. 3. with chap. xix. 2. Isa. viii. 12, 13. And likewise to an owning of their civil courts, paying cels and other impositions imposed and employed for the maintainance of the Prince and Princess of Orange, now become the head of the Malignants, Prelatic, Indulged, Toleratists, and Sectarians in these lands. Thereby acknowledging him and them, and advancing, defending, and securing them and their confederates in their designs, both at home and abroad; and thus venturing our stock in one vessel, *Casting in our lot, and having one purse with them*, Like that in Prov. i. 14. But such as will regard the Lord's counsel, ought to regard what follows, ver. 15. *My son walk not in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path*. It is a strengthening of the hand of evil doers, and a sacrilegious robbing of God of our means and estates, giving that to his enemies which we gave away to him, in our sacred covenants; contrary to the zeal we owe to
our

* This appears to have respect to the Treaty of Union entered into at the Hague, Feb. —, 1691. by the confederate princes and allies, (*viz* The emperor of Germany, the kings of Spain, England, &c.) wherein they say. "We solemnly protest before God—that we will never break off this Union, nor make peace with Lewis the XIV. of France, till the following Articles be executed: To the obligation of which, we will oblige ourselves for ever. First, Till he has made reparation to the *Holy See* (of Rome) for whatsoever he has acted against it; and until he has annulled and made void all these infamous proceedings against the *Holy Father*, Innocent the XI."— And in the prosecution of this treaty Angus's regiment, among others (having Mr. Shields as their minister) was sent over to Flanders to the combined army, where he, and they continued several years, until they were weary of him, and he of them. May it not seem strange, that Mr. Shields and so many of the persecuted society people, whom he had induced to join in the regiment, (*to go and pull down the gates of Rome, &c.*) should now be engaged in such a cause, and associate with such company as the allied army, espousing the Pope's cause? Yea even zealous, godly and learned Mr. Alexander Shields, who had so often preached, written and protested against association and confederacy with Popish Idolaters, Hereticks, Malignants or Sectarians, and even had written the Declaration which at the raising of the regiment they sent to their officers, May 13th, 1689. and afterward emitted at Dumblain, &c. (which is inserted page 394) and it is probable that verbally he would yet protest against the same, whatever his practice was. May not this be a Beacon to warn all, how dangerous it is to think that verbally protesting against any sinful course, while practically it is counter-acted,
and

our Covenanted Husband, and the honour of his house, by not only strengthening and securing his enemies in the possession of it, after he had once again shaken their foundations; but inviting them, and prostituting our estates and consciences to them, not only playing the harlot with them, but hiring them when they have done, like these people of old, Ezek. xvi. 33, 34. *They give gifts to all whores, but thou givest gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom.*—And what could be their hire if it was not their taxations they paid, and money they sent to them, 2 Kings xvi. 8. and chap: xviii. 14, 15. Hof. viii. 9, 10. It is an helping, strengthening, supporting, and furnishing them, contrary to 2 Chron. xix. 2. Isa. lxxv. 11. Jer. xxiii. 14. Contrary to all our former resolutions; oaths, confessions, humiliations, and to the Solemn League and Covenant Article 4th and 6th.—Contrary to the Acts of the General Assembly 1647, session 15th, Where it is called a joining hand in hand,—a casting in their lots, and interweaving their interests in way of combination with the popish, prelatic, and malignant party: And contrary to the Declaration of the General Assembly 1648, session 21. ordaining “that this church
“and kingdom concur not in, nor any way assist this
O o o “ present

and contradicted; will be a sufficient testimony against the same in the sight of God, or avert his righteous judgments. This appears to be eminently exemplified in the case of pious Mr. Alexander Shields; and others: Who after the raising of Angus's regiment, he continued with them in Scotland and Flanders a number of years, with much grief, toil, and contempt from the he was associated with. Returning to Scotland, he was for a short time settled in St. Andrews, in association with many of the old Episcopal Curates there, who hated, mocked, and derided him, and he, and they entered into a disputation in the Episcopal controversy, by word, and write (some of which is yet extant) until Darien Expedition occurred, when to be quite of him, they procured him to be chosen (with others) to go and plant a flourishing church in the Wilds of Caledonia, in company with the most hope-less stuff to make it of, that Scotland, or perhaps the world, afforded, and what comfort he had therein, Mr Boiland's account of Darien bears witness. So, as many then counted it his sin to join and draw many others with him, into association and confederacy with malignants it was also his plague and punishment in an eminent way, to be associated and connected with such, until his death. Whether his principles and conduct, at that time, or the sentiments and conduct of Mr. Renwick and the Societies (in a similar case 1685. with respect to Argyle's association) was most agreeable to the rule, must be left with the reader.

“ present engagement, as they would not partake in o-
 “ ther men’s sins, and to receive of their plagues; but
 “ that by the grace and assistance of Christ they stedfast-
 “ ly resolve to suffer the rod of the wicked, and the ut-
 “ termost which men’s malice can inflict upon them, ra-
 “ ther than to put forth their hand to iniquity.”

A *Fifth* step of defection was that some of us concurred in the sinful levies—for prosecuting this most impious confederacy bottomed on their late declaration against that bloody tyrant of France, whereof one of the causes is the wrongs done to their confederates abroad, who are the chief supporters of Antichrist—in which they are assisted not only by the body of the land, but by their clergy, who not only in their doctrine encourage them therein, but hound out their elders, who most barbarously, on the Lord’s day, break in upon poor men’s houses with their mouths full of bloody oaths, in some places interrupting family-worship, and violently drawing servants from their masters, and children from their parents, and parents from their children and wives, cruelly binding, guarding, and selling their covenanted brethren to bloody enemies for supporting their designs and interests †. And some of us taking commissions from the country gentlemen, some of whom were guilty of blood, and generally all, of the public defections, and opposers of our Testimony: And some were prevailed with to take money from them, others keeping country mixed musters, by virtue of Council orders, in such a way as that they could not suppose that it was in obedience to them,—and look upon us as their militia. And thus many of us by their wiles and alarms, the last year at Glasgow, were sadly ensnared and involved in an association with the very bulk of all the indulged, complying and persecuting party in the West: Contrary to both scripture and the acts of the church of Scotland as is shewed in the

† Mr. William Boyd that he might shew what kindness he had for his old friends, and that he might be behind none in this, after he was settled in Dalry, caused his elders in the night, to take out of their beds severals of the dissenters in that parish, and upon the Sabbath morning shaved the old men’s beards to make them appear young that so they might pass for the parish, and so presented them to the recruiting officer: But was in this disappointed, as the officer would not accept of them because of their age. Such was a part of the reward Mr. Boyd returned to his old friends for contributing so largely for his maintenance while he was abroad, as is before related.

the fourth step. And the Acknowledgment of Sins is so clear and peremptory in this, that it may make us to tremble to think on it, whereby we are standing under such a sentence, which we deliberately, and sincerely past on ourselves, that if ever we did any more join with the people of these abominations, the Lord would consume us, till there were no remnant nor escaping, &c. and this was done, not in rashness, but with a scripture precedent, Ezra xi. 12, 13. and experience hath made this clear to us, we never mingled ourselves amongst malignants, but the Lord pursued us with indignation, and stamped that sin in legible characters upon our judgment, witness, Dumbar, Inverkithin, Pentland, Bothwel, &c.

A *Sixth* step of our defection and cause of mourning, was our suffering the most material points of our testimony, not only to be controverted, but publicly opposed and disowned by these three foresaid ministers and their accomplices, without a suitable testimony against them, whereby many of us have been brought to lick up our vomit again: Several taking occasion to traffick with them several ways, as if it had been lawful to cut and carve in the Lord's matters, and so gradually, many of us were brought in to hear, and plead for the backsliden ministers, both in Scotland, and these from Ireland, and to pay them stipends; and some of us who were chosen elders, by our then faithful ministers, accepted of new admissions from them, notwithstanding of all their old and late defections, which in part, are to be seen in our Informatory Vindication, and the Testimony against the toleration, given in by worthy Mr. Renwick †. And partly now legible in vive characters on all their proceedings. Thus we were brought to an owning of their corrupt and null Assemblies, Synods, Presbyteries, and Sessions, in our petitions, protestations, and otherwise: Although they were many ways contrary to the constitution of our former faithful General Assemblies, and to the comely order of this church: by which men guilty of scandal, or bringing in novations to the church, pleading for, consenting, or advising to sinful compliances, or who were malignants and disaffected to the cause of God, or who by their counsel, countenance or approbation, make themselves accessory to any evil course were

† And is now further evident in Mr. Renwick's Testimony vindicated.

declared incapable of the meanest office in Christ's house, or of trust in the smallest of his judicatories; but rather, by his law, and the laws of our covenanted church, to be brought before Christ's bar (not to judge but) to be judged, for their so many ways betraying, and deserting his cause, persecuting, and reproaching his friends, and strengthening his enemies, burying our sacred covenants and solemn engagements, and all the faithful testimonies and protestations of this church, and of the Lord's people in this land, with all the Acts of our faithful General Assemblies, Causes of the Lord's Wrath, &c. and now impudently and stubbornly defending and pleading for their former, and later offences, and continuing therein, *No man repenting of his wickedness, in saying, what have I done,* Jer. viii. 6. Mal. i. 6, 7. and ii. 17. and iii. 8.

In former lawful and faithful General Assemblies the ground of their sitting, voting and proceedings used, and ought to be the word of God, (Acts xv. 28. and xvi. 4.) the Confession of Faith, Covenants, Acknowledgment of Sins, and Engagement to duties, with the Acts of former free and faithful General Assemblies, for which see the General Assembly, 1638. session 26th, Decem. 20th.—But now the ground of all their moving, voting, and proceedings in their pretended Assemblies, is is their new, clipped, Erastian platform of Presbyterian government (so called) with their King's letters and recommendations. See Brown's history of the Indulgence page 116. Object. 3.

Former Assemblies as they revived and ratified what former free and lawful General Assemblies did, so they annulled all former corrupt Assemblies. See Assembly 1638. who made many laudable acts. But now these acts are, at least practically, and by many doctrinally condemned, and corrupt Assemblies approved, *viz.* these at Dundee, St. Andrews, and Edinburgh, Anno 1652. who justified and enacted, the taking in the malignants into places of power and trust, and persecuted their faithful protesting brethren. And now, as not satisfied to tread in the same steps, their present pretended Assemblies labour by many stages to surpass them, notwithstanding of the unparalleled perjury, bloodshed, &c. and the Lord's wrath written in legible characters upon that defection: As witness their justifying, and refusing to condemn their pretended Presbyteries at Sundewall,

Dindeugh, and Edinburgh, for suspending faithful preachers, as worthy Cameron, &c. And their several pretended assemblies after Bothwel for suppressing of faithful field-preaching; wherein they transacted and compacted with the then tyrant for accepting of Erastian indulgences, and drawing up of blasphemous addresses, &c.

Former free and lawful General Assemblies, used diligently to search for and purge out all who were under scandal, and guilty of bringing in novations, and carrying on defection contrary to the sworn covenant and lawfully established acts and constitutions of this church, founded upon the word of God; According to the order (in the 3d General Assembly of this church, *July 1562*) "that at the entry of every Assembly, the first
 " work is to be anent trying and purging the members
 " thereof, requiring all, as they render the glory of God
 " and the well of this kirk, and as they shall be answerable to God,—that they give in the names and faults
 " of any of their number, for removing of the slander
 " which arises to the whole kirk by their admitting of
 " such members. Likeas, it is appointed that any to
 " whose charge any thing is laid, ought to be removed
 " out of the Assembly until his cause be tried; and if
 " he be convicted, he can have no voice until the kirk
 " receive satisfaction."—The like is to be seen in the subsequent Assemblies, *March 1568. August 6th, 1578. and 1580, 1581.* Also all the faithful Assemblies of this church since the glorious reformation in the year 1638, have followed the same steps.

What shall we think of the pretended Assemblies now? where none are admitted to sit amongst them, but such as are openly scandalous, guilty of both former and present defections, directly contrary to the solemn oaths, engagements, constitutions and acts of the church of Scotland; and witnessed against by many declarations, remonstrances, protestations, and blood and sufferings. Witness their admitting the whole train of the indulged, addressers for the toleration, bonders, testers, curate-bearers, who communicate with them; and such as rode with the enemies for apprehending the Lord's people, sat on their assizes, guarded them to scaffolds, &c. are admitted as elders, without repentance required or given; and of compliers with, and connivers at such, almost the whole of their Assembly consists. While they
 debared

debarred Messrs. Lining, Shields and Boyd for their former professed faithfulness, till they acknowledged (by receiving patiently a reprimand for) their former faithfulness, as schism, division, &c. and submitted and subjected themselves, their lives and doctrine to the cognizance of their judicatories; thus acknowledging duty to be sin, and sin to be duty †, Mal. iii. 14, 15.

Ah! may it not be a question, Whether Prelates or pretended Presbyterians have given the deepest wound to the church of Scotland, and shall have the greatest challenge when the chief Shepherd comes to plead the controversies of Zion?

In former times, after a defection the records of church and state, were, and ought to be revised, and seen what we had attained unto, and thus entered ourselves heirs unto our fathers, and built upon the good old foundation, (the rubbish being once taken away) and so gone on to more perfection: But now we enter not with our old Master, Christ, but take a new charter from the open enemies and their accomplices, and enter not ourselves heirs to our father's purchase through blood and wrestlings, but to our grandfathers, as broken heirs to evite the debt of the many vows and engagements,—and testimonies that we and the whole land are inviolably engaged unto: Far from the zeal and faithfulness of our fathers in the General Assembly 1638, who notwithstanding of all the threatenings of enemies, did approve and revive the acts of former free and lawful General Assemblies, and condemned and annulled corrupt Assemblies, renewed the National Covenant,—deposed and excommunicated the bishops, &c. Whereas now many curates, guilty of perjury, blood and persecution, are continued,—by virtue of a letter from their King, and acts of their pretended parliament, and platform of their Presbyteries, so called,—and enacting in their pretended General Assembly, 1690, that they would depose no incumbents simply for their judgment anent church-government; and as is yet more palpable in their practice since, the civil powers ordaining collectors some of whom are Presbyterian elders, (so called) to lift the vacant stipends for the maintenance of the Prelates and

† The reader will remember and compare this with the proposal made by Mr. Lining at the Gen. Meet. Sept. 25th, 1689. and what was agreed upon by the meeting upon the 6th and 7th of November the same year.

and some profane Curates, contrary to our 2d book of discipline, chap. ix. which calls such things detestable sacrilege.—Yea these hirelings and soul-destroyers are suffered to preach, and administer both sacraments, and enjoy benefices, besides meeting-houses, in most places of the land; and collectors, surveyors, chamberlains, vintners, &c. in Charles' and York's time, who for seeming hazard durst not preach the gospel, are now admitted without a challenge.

In former times, after a defection, the renewing of our solemn covenants was always set about. This church according to many scripture precedents, Deut. xxix. 1, —12. Josh. xxiv. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3. and xv. 12, —15. 2 Kings xi. 17. and that as a fit and excellent mean to attain the favour of God, and to unite and strengthen them against the common enemy, and for the preservation and propagation of the true reformed religion; as in the years 1557, 1559, 1560, 1586, 1638, 1639, 1643, and 1648. with the acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties.

Now what a dreadful and astonishing thing is it, that these solemn vows and covenants, the marriage contract betwixt Christ and these nations; a covenant to which Christ's witnesses did always adhere, and for which they suffered, should not only be burnt by enemies; but by these called Presbyterian ministers and professors, now vilified, opposed and buried?

Ah! we have not kept up a due impression of our solemn covenants with God, nor endeavoured to perform them; therefore hath given up the most part to a palpable disowning, burying, renouncing and abjuring of them. The cursed thing which was before secretly with us, is now pleaded and disputed for by our pretended seers and watchmen, called Presbyterians. We have dealt treacherously with God, therefore he has given us up to treacherous dealers.

Covenant-breaking is a most dangerous and dreadful sin, for which great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against these lands because of forsaking and despising the covenant, and often condemned, threatened, and severely plagued of God, Psalms lxxv. iii. 34, —37. Jer. xi. 10. 2 Kings xvii. 15. Lev. xxvi. 25. Deut. xxix. 20, —24. Jer. xxii. 8, 9. Ezek. xvii. 15. Amos i. 9. Josh. vii. 11, 12. 2 Sam. xxii. 1, 2.

A seventh step of defection and cause of mourning, is our not studying personal reformation, and going before one another in the example of a real reformation: But rather many have been bad examples of deformation in our practices,—therefore the holy and jealous God has given us up to build again the things which we once destroyed, and to an avowed disowning of our covenanted reformation. Neither endeavoured we, while God's candle shined upon our tabernacle, and his presence and protection followed us in the wilderness as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, to get our case searched and discovered, and our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; therefore most of us are given up to conscience-wasting sins. We have not drawn with joy from our wells of salvation while they were open, and running in pure and powerful ordinances; therefore God hath suffered, first the Philistines, and now our professing, backsliding, and backbiting brethren to stop these wells.

An eight step of defection and cause of mourning, is our promiscuous admitting of severals into our meetings and societies, while known to be guilty of some one or more of these things, without any challenge or evidence of their sense of, or sorrow for the same; particularly admitting such as stole away from Angus's regiment, or laid down their charge in it, without giving a testimony against it, and taking up their former ground and the good old way of managing it;—and likewise hearing and calling these three ministers after all the discoveries of their relinquishing and betraying the cause;—and our security, impenitency, obstinacy and incorrigibleness under all the dreadful tokens of the Lord's indignation against us because of the same; so that while he continues to smite us, we are so far from humbling ourselves that we look with an evil eye upon any that out of conscience disowns, or discountenances us in these courses, so that we wax worse and worse, and sin more and more, as if we had been delivered to commit all these abominations, Jer. viii. 5, 6, 7. Isa, xlii. 23, 24, 25. Lev. xxvi. 14,—39.

Yea, a toleration of all errors, heresies and blasphemies is now promoted and pleaded for, and connived at, notwithstanding the clear light of the scripture to the contrary, and also of reason both human and divine,—as is evident in many scriptures, particularly Gen. xxxv. 2, 3, 4. Exod. xxiii. 32, 33. chap. xxxiv. 12,—15. Deut.

“ posing the truth, hindering reformation, seducing of
 “ others, &c.?” And the ministers of the county Pala-
 tine of Lancaster in their harmonious testimony against
 toleration, subscribed by them *March 7th, 1647*, do fitly
 add, “ That a toleration is the putting a sword in a mad
 “ man’s hand, a cup of poison in the hand of a child, a
 “ letting loose of madmen with firebrands in their hands,
 “ an appointing of a city of refuge in men’s consciences
 “ for the devil to flee to, and a laying of a stumbling-
 “ block before the blind, a proclaiming liberty for the
 “ wolves to come into Christ’s fold, to prey upon his
 “ lambs; a toleration of soul-murder, the greatest of all
 “ murder, &c.” Therefore I durst not say a confede-
 racy with, nor hear such ministers, nor own them as
 faithful ministers;—because they have never as yet laid
 down a cleanly way to purge the church of Scotland of
 all the abominable things that have been committed
 therein; and any amongst them that appear to be more
 faithful and tender-hearted than others, they dare not
 use their freedom, for fear of being put out of their sy-
 nagogue: So that now the church of Scotland seems to
 be in as sad a case as ever she was in, when by act of par-
 liament they have sold away all these noble rights both
 of church and state that were so dearly conquered in
 our father’s days.

O how dreadful wickedness is in that sinful union be-
 twixt Scotland and England! The nobility of Scotland
 have given away their power to the beast.—And oh!
 how sad! that so few of them have had a heart to give
 faithful testimony against the same; and any ministers
 that are more free and faithful in giving warning to the
 poor misled people, all the rest are crying out against
 them with despite.—Therefore I leave my Protestation
 and testimony against all, both in church and state, who
 have transacted, assisted, consented to or connived with
 them that did it, and that have not in their place and
 station testified against it, for these have given their con-
 sent to it in less or more: Yea, they are all guilty be-
 fore the Lord who are not humbled and mourning be-
 fore the Lord for the same.

Prelacy brake down and burnt our glorious covenanted
 reformation, and this bastard Erastian Presbytery hath
 buried it in deep forgetfulness. But I die in the faith of
 it, that the burying of it shall hereafter be its glorious re-
 surrection. But I am sure of this, that there are sad
 days

days abiding Scotland before our Lord return to it again to build his ruined work. Blood, blood shall be shed in plenty in Scotland, for the innocent blood shed therein.—Thus far with mine own hand; but being so weak and bed-fast, I must now use the hand of another.

Now having briefly told what I own and what I disown, I think fit in the next place, to give an account when the Lord began to take a dealing with my soul which in all humility I desire only to do for his glory, and to provoke others who shall arise, to fall in love with my kind Lord.

If ever I got good of the gospel, it was under the ministry of that great and shining light Mr. William Guthrie. O! how sweet did the Lord make the free offers of himself to my soul by dear Mr. Guthrie; so that after the ministers, but especially he, were cast out of their churches, it was very sad and heavy for me to bear. So my dear minister being removed, I began to enter into solemn covenanting with God.

The next remarkable passage of his love was at *May-sole* communion, where I took my communion with a solemn surrendering and giving away myself to the Lord.* O! the remembrance of that time hath often since refreshed my soul; albeit I had heard the curates and the backsliden ministers, yet the Lord made light to arise by several of them who were more faithful than others, as Mr. John Kid, Mr. John King, Mr. John Dickson, but particularly by faithful Mr. Richard Cameron, who was helped pleasantly to redd marches betwixt sin and duty. After the defeat at Bothwell, I was intercommuned and declared rebel. The pleasantest time that ever I enjoyed was then, when I was joined with that suffering remnant, while hunted as partridges on the mountains, in following the persecuted gospel, especially in pleasant Mr. Renwick's time, who was helped to be faithful in his life and at his death.

But as I may remember these days with joy and comfort; so with as much grief and sorrow I may remember what followed: For he being gone, and having handed down a pleasant and well-stated testimony;—after the re-

P p p 2

volution

* There is extant five of his covenant transactions, the first is dated July 1664, the second August 4th, 1678, the third February 26th, 1689, the fourth March 3d 1689, the fifth Jan, 1st, 1696.

volution, those that should have done the like, soon after treacherously betrayed it into the hands of its enemies, and put all into the saddest of confusions; and not only so, but took the bulk of that pleasant party along with them, who had been helped to stand it out faithfully during the heat of persecution, who were now by the subtle draughts and fair speeches of these three treacherous men, Messrs. Lining, Shields and Boyd, led aside into defection, from one step into another, until they were as foul as the time could make them. O! but these were sad and breaking times; and I wanted not my part of the trials of these times, by reason of the great respect I bore to these persons of quality in the place where I then resided, (*viz.* Keriland) and any thing I was then drawn into, when the Lord reckoned with me for it, was made as the terrors of death unto me.

O! that was a dark time, as ever mine eyes saw. But when it pleased the Lord to give a little light and a little comfort and help, by raising up and spiring some to be means in his hand to gather some few of the once many scattered people of the Lord, and to bring them to understand their ways and one another's minds, and to take up the fallen testimony, (though in a private way and capacity); this was a new joy and comfort unto me. The causes of fasts were then sweet. The public testimonies were then desirable. Our meetings sweet and refreshing; pleasant were our out-goings, and sweet our home-comings. But after the death of brave Sir Robert Hamilton, the clouds began to darken our skies.

After many fruitless essays,—it pleased the Lord to send us a blink of the gospel; but it hath but a winter-beam or heat, how long it shall continue, God only knoweth. O that both ministers and people may be tender and faithful both in the cause, and in their conversation, and then you may look for the longer continuance of it.

And now being on the borders of eternity, I dare not once doubt but he who hath begun this work, will also perfect and finish it. But O! to have it once fairly finished. Neither dare I call in question that this is the Lord's way that I die owning, he having so often confirmed my soul therein by his word and spirit, that it were a piece of great rebellion in me once to doubt it: Neither am I in the least doubt but that his cause shall yet triumph,—let apostate ministers and professors do their
utmost

utmost to hinder it, yet in spite of them all, Christ shall get up and be glorious in Scotland.—But O! as ye would ever desire to see it, strive to be faithful to the cause, zealous, holy and tender in your practices,—and patient in well-doing. Weary not in following your duty, for the time may be lengthened out yet. The Lord be with you all. I shall say no more; but to him that must confirm, comfort and establish you, and give me a fair landing, be praise both now and for ever. AMEN.

BUSBEE, April 10, 1710.

JOHN WILSON.

Here follows a few Extracts from the dying Testimony of Mr. ROBERT SMITH, Student of Divinity, &c.

IN our own country I heard that faithful servant of Jesus Christ Mr. James Renwick on Heb. xiii. 13. Though my access to it was with great difficulty, and seeming danger,—soon after, joining with the persecuted party, I frequented their Meetings with pleasure and delight. During which time the Lord was training me up for after times, and feeding me as a lamb in a large pasture, and clearing me about my souls interest from many sweet scriptures, and answers of prayer, making me to devote, and dedicate myself to the Lord and his suffering cause (in the work of the ministry) and in testimony of his acceptance of my poor offer, he sealed and confirmed the same with his Holy Spirit of truth upon my spirit, with the joys of the Holy Ghost, for about a year and a half.—But after the death of that pleasant plant, faithful Mr. Renwick. The Revolution coming on, the breaking of the party soon followed. The three ministers soon leaving us, joined with the corrupt establishment 1690. sins snares and defections growing apace,—after the breaking of the party, there were several Meetings betwixt the remaining dissenters—at length by the first eight causes (or steps of * defection, called Tinnald Paper, upon which some Fast-days were kept) and the Declaration 1692, a considerable party from the several

* Several of these old men in their dying testimonies mention these eight causes upon which their first fast day was kept, as being the sweetest fast day they had seen of a long time before, particularly old John Mattheson, who was one of these banished to Carolina.

veral shires came to be united again upon the old ground—and suitable measures for regulating their Meetings, laid down: And some from the other two nations hearing of our comely order, and that the Lord was amongst us desired our help to rectify disorders amongst them, and to erect fellowships: Whereupon the General Meeting sent John Clark and me, twice to Ireland, and as often with others I was sent to England, where we got fellowships erected according to our own order at home.—After the emission of the foresaid Declaration, persecution arising a little, some of our number being taken and imprisoned (for eight months) others sought after who fell not into their hands.—Mr. James Kid who was gone abroad about a year before to qualify himself at their Colleges in philosophy and divinity for printing the said Declaration together with Mr. Hugh Binning's piece against association, had been imprisoned there †. Whereupon,

† As an anonymous writer of the Life of Mr. Binning prefixed to the quarto volume of his sermons, doubts, or almost denies Mr. Binning to be the author of his case of conscience concerning association, &c. It may not be improper here to shew the groundlessness of what the said writer alleges on that head. He says, "It is much questioned by the most intelligent if that book was really Mr. Binning's, —because the Publisher conceals his name, and brings no manner of voucher shewing that it was Mr. Binning's, &c." This is somewhat strange, that a Nameless AUTHOR should quarrel that book because the Publisher hath omitted to tell his name, and hath only inserted the Author's name. He might have known that it was not long a secret that Mr. James Kid (who was afterward settled minister in Queen's-terry) was the Publisher; and upon that account suffered both long long imprisonment at Utrecht, and the seizure of all that they could get of the books; and as for vouchers, Mrs. Binning, the relict of the worthy author being then alive, and having connexion, and much correspondence with Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Renwick, and many of the persecuted society people, and of the same sentiments with them, as appears by several letters yet extant in their own hand writ; and Mr. Renwick speaks of her in some of his letters, as in the 49 and 104 pages of the printed volume of his letters: but especially it appears by a paragraph which is omitted in the printed copy, page 58. which shall be here transcribed from the original written with his own hand, wherein he says, "Likewise (according to your direction) I challenged Mrs. Binning—upon the commendation she gave to John Willson, in her Letter to you: But she says, That she had not then seen his testimony, and was sorry when she saw it, that it was so contrary both to her thoughts and commendation of him." And likewise a postscript to the 20th Letter relative to the same matter, is also omitted. And about

upon, to know of his affairs, and to minister comfort unto him, the General Meeting made choice of me to go over to him; so with difficulty getting me loosed from my charge (being then in Earlstoun's, teaching his children) I went. But except the first packet of letters, I could get no more in to him, neither could I have access to him myself during the whole time of his imprisonment. So writing an account of this to these who sent me, and to know what was their will further,—they wrote again, ordering me to stay still there and go to some of their Colleges.—But I not seeing it fit—to go to Utrecht, lest I should be clapt up beside Mr. Kid, being of the same mind with him ament these things for which he was imprisoned, I went to Groningen College, where I commenced *master of arts*, no iniquious imposition being there laid upon me, which before in Glasgow I had shunned because of the oath then tendered to such as passed their degrees binding them to Prelacy, &c.—Hearing of Mr. Kid's liberation, I went to Utrecht and
fat

about the same time that Mr. Binning's book was printed, while Sir Robert Hamilton was prisoner upon the account of the declaration in 1692. he wrote a Letter to Mrs. Binning, wherein he complains of her unwonted silence, in his honourable bonds for such a noble Master; yet trusting her sympathy is not diminished, he adds, "O my worthy friend, I cannot express
" Christ's love and kindness since the time of my bonds. He
" hath broke up new treasures of felt love and sweetness, and
" hath been pleased to give me visitations of love and access to
" himself: to comfort and confirm poor feckless me many ways,
" that this is his way that is now persecuted, and that it is his
" precious truths, interests and concerns that I am now suffering
" for, whatever enemies with their associated ministers and pro-
" tectors may allege, &c."

By which it is evident that they had much correspondence with Mrs Binning and there is yet a fair and correct manuscript copy of the forsaide books extant, which was in Sir Roberts custody, and it is more than probable that it was procured from Mrs Binning especially as she survived its publication without quarreling it.

It is unnecessary to notice what further is thrown out by the foresaid anonymous writer against the Book and the Publisher as Mr. Wedrow in the preface to Mr. Binnings octavo volume of Sermons printed 1760. hath modestly animadverted thereupon and says there is no reason to doubt, if it was Mr. Binnings, he also ingenuously confesseth that there is in it the best collection of scriptures he knows concerning the sin and danger of joining with wicked and ungodly men &c. and that it was wrote in a smooth good stile, agreeable enough to Mr Binnings sentiments in some of his sermons.

fat down with him there for another session of that College, mean while finding him losing his old ground and old principles, and drinking in the indulged lax Erastian principles, he became rather a snare, a burden, and a trial, than a comfort and help to me.—So seeing I could not obtain licence and ordination, I made all the haste I could from thence. My experiences there, and returns of prayer were not so many as they were great and good ones.

When going off from Leith, I took on Jacob's Bethel-yow, with this addition, to be kept right in my principles; and therein the Lord heard me, and restored me safe both in body and principle, notwithstanding of many great assaults I had, especially from my own countrymen, to relinquish the same. Whereas Mr Kid returned not so.

When I returned, I sojourned among the meetings for their encouragement and strengthening; and indeed it was easy for me, so long as that great man Sir Robert Hamilton lived, and was able to travel among the party; for he, laying his worldly honour in the dust, out of true love to his royal and princely Master's honour, was as a father to us all; and while he lived, things went well with us.

NOT having room for any more of it, nor for others of the same nature; it may suffice at present to shew that there are extant about twenty dying testimonies of such of the Society people as overlived the persecuting period, many of whom died before, or shortly after the year 1700, wherein is shewed what they owned and what they disowned, many of their exercises and spiritual experiences, and the comfort and assurance they had at their death, &c. which testimonies or extracts from them, these in whose custody they are, shall willingly make public, if desired.

S O M E

CONSIDERATIONS

Contributing unto the *Discovery* of the
Dangers that threaten RELIGION, and
the *Work* of REFORMATION in the
Church of

SCOTLAND.

Published for informing the ignorant and inadvertent ;
for awakening the careless and secure ; for stirring up
unto the exercise of repentance and faith towards
God ; and for persuading unto a godly union and
edifying peace, &c.

BY JAMES GUTHRIE, *Mini-*
ster of the Gospel at STIRLING.

*The lion hath roared, who will not fear ? The Lord God
hath spoken, who will not prophesy ? Amos iii. 8.*

*What meanest thou, O sleeper ? Arise, call upon thy God,
if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not,
Jonah i. 6.*

*I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick
out of his place, except thou repent, Rev. ii. 5.*

G L A S G O W :

PRINTED IN THE YEAR, M, DCC, LXXX.

Consideration First.

From that swarm of pestilent errors and heresies that doth abound in the neighbour nation of England, and our vicinity thereunto, and intimate and daily correspondence therewith.

IT is far from my purpose to cast any imputation upon *England*, or to render the neighbour church and nation vile in the eyes of any, by discovering their nakedness, in reckoning up the many pestilent errors and heresies that many therein are infected with: I know there be many thousands in that land who have not bowed their knees to *Baal*, nor defiled their garments by departing from the faith; but do sadly bemoan, and faithfully bear witness against the falling away of others. And I do easily acknowledge, that *England* hath a great and honourable company of precious, and sound, and able, and godly ministers and professors, as readily are to be found in any nation or church upon the earth; but I hope it shall be no injury nor offence to say, (and would to God I could speak it with that compassionate resentment and serious affectedness of heart, that doth become in so sad and soul-concerning a case) that a great many in that church and nation, are infected with many noisome errors and pestilent heresies, which fret as a gangrene unto the destroying of many poor souls. Is there almost any of the precious and necessary truths of God, but hath some opposers and contradicters in *England*? Not only are the beautiful superstructures thrown down, but the very lowest and most necessary foundations of the Christian religion razed and plucked up by the roots by the blasphemies of some. To dispute, and declaim, and write against the blessed Trinity, against the divinity of the eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever, against the sacred scriptures, that they are not the word of God, are, with

not a few, things common and ordinary: Yea, these very things which *Jews* and *Mahometans*, and not a few in Pagan nations do acknowledge; and which being denied, the condition of a man is little better than that of a beast; such as, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, heaven and hell, eternal rewards and eternal punishments, are, by diverse, wantonly debated, and by some pertinaciously denied and impugned. The time was, and that not many years ago, when *Independency*, *Eraastianism*, *Brownism*, and *Anabaptism* in that land, were looked upon as threatening danger to the churches and work of reformation in these nations; yet in comparison to the errors that now abound in *England*, these are but as mole-hills to mountains. The whole body of *Arminianism*, *Antinomianism*, *Pelagianism*, *Socinianism*, *Familism*, *Quakerism*, and almost what not, that hath at any time been broached by the father of lies, and infested the Christian church, but hath some brokers and patrons there. That these things are so, is but too sadly true, and these things being so, Is not the church of Scotland by reason of it's vicinity unto, and intimate and daily correspondence and commerce with *England*, in imminent hazard to be tainted with infection thereby? The vicinity and next neighbourhood of nations and churches, especially when attended with intimate and ordinary fellowship, hath always had great influence upon the manners of one another, chiefly as to the depraving and corrupting of religion; to which all the sons of men, by reason of their in-bred ignorance and instability, and the power of corrupt imaginations, are of themselves but too prone. The children of Israel (not only) when they lived in the land of Egypt, were infested with many idolatrous and heathenish customs, Ezek. xxi. 27. (but even) when separated and brought into Canaan, albeit railed in and fenced with the holy and perfect law of the Lord, to which was added the sanction of many great and precious promises to such as did obey, and of many dreadful threatnings against the disobedient and rebellious, which were accordingly verified by God in eminent acts of his justice and goodness; the idolatrous opinions and practices of their neighbour nations had such influence upon them, that they could not be kept (scarce at any time for one generation together) from learning their works, and going a whoring

after their corrupt customs, Pſal. cvi. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39. Yea, ſometimes came to be worſe than the heathen, whom the Lord had deſtroyed before them, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 9. and to change his judgments into wickedneſs, more than the nations, and his ſtatutes more than the countries that were round about them, Ezek. v. 6. eſpecially after that religion came to be corrupted amongſt the ten tribes by Jeroboam, his erecting the calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*. Judah and Jeruſalem, though they had the temple, and the ark, and the oracle, and the altar, with all the other ordinances of God, and alſo many prophets riſing up early, and ſpeaking to them in the name of the Lord, did then become treacherous, Jer. iii. 11. When *Abolab* ſaw what *Abolibab* had done, ſhe became *more corrupt in her inordinate love than ſhe, and in her whoredoms more than her ſiſter in her whoredoms,*—till the Lord ſaw that ſhe was deſiled, and that they took both one way Ezek. xxiii. 11, 13. The hiſtories of the Engliſh and Scotch nations and churches, do teſtify, that they have for moſt part run one lot, both as to their reforming and corrupting of religion. This conſideration was the prime ground of theſe confederacies that were tranſacted, firſt, between Q. Eliz. of *England*, and the lords of the congregation in *Scotland*; and afterwards between that queen and king James the VI. It was alſo this eſpecially, that did induce theſe nations and churches to engage themſelves in the ſolemn league and covenant, *Anno 1643.* becauſe (as it is expreſſed by the miniſters of England in their letter to the General Aſſembly of the church of Scotland, *Anno 1641*) they

‘ did know and acknowledge, that theſe churches of
 ‘ England Scotland, ſeem both to be imbarcked in the
 ‘ ſame bottom, to ſink and ſwim together, and are ſo
 ‘ nigh conjoined by ſo many ſtrong ties, not only as fel-
 ‘ low-members, under the ſame head, Chriſt, and fel-
 ‘ low-ſubjects, under the ſame king; but alſo by ſuch
 ‘ neighbourhood and vicinity of place, that if any evil
 ‘ ſhall much infect the one, the other cannot be altoge-
 ‘ ther free, or if for the preſent it ſhould, yet in pro-
 ‘ ceſs of time it would ſenſibly ſuffer alſo.’ Which is alſo homologated by the Aſſembly in their answer to that letter: ‘ We have learned (ſay they) by long experi-
 ‘ ence, ever ſince the time of reformation, and eſpecial-
 ‘ ly after the two kingdoms have been by the great good-
 ‘ neſs of God both, united under one head and monarch,
 but

‘ but most of all, of late, which is not unknown to you, what danger and contagion in matters of kirk-government, of divine worship, and of doctrine, may come from the one kirk to the other; which besides all other reasons, may make us pray to God, and to desire you and all that love the honour of Christ, and the peace of these kirks and kingdoms, heartily to endeavour, that there might be in both kirks one Confession of Faith, one Directory for Public Worship, one Catechism, and one Form of Kirk-Government.’ And the Commissioners of the Parliament of *England* in the propositions given by them to a Committee, to be presented to the General Assembly of this church, *Anno* 1643, for persuading of them to further and expedite the aid and assistance, then demanded by both Houses from the kingdom of *Scotland*, after they have given them to understand, that by reason of the prevailing of Papists, the Prelatical faction, and other malignant enemies to these who desired reformation, the hopeful beginnings thereof, were likely not only to be rendered ineffectual, but all the former evils, superstitions and corruptions to be introduced by strong hand.

They do in the next place tell them, ‘ That if once these again should take root in the church and kingdom of *England*, they would quickly spread their venom and infection into the church, and kingdom of *Scotland*;’ the truth of which being well known, both to our church and state, did prevail upon them to concur with *England* in counsels and forces, for suppressing and preventing of these things, as may be seen in their answers to the declarations of the honourable houses of the Parliament of *England*, concerning that purpose. Upon the same ground, the church of *Scotland* did frequently by her commissioners at *London*, and by her letters to the Parliament of *England*, and to the Assembly of Divines at *Westminster*, and by her exhortations to her brethren of *England*, often warn of the danger of errors and heresies, when they were but yet in their first buddings, and far from the height that they are now at in *England*. The words of the Assembly in their declaration and brotherly exhortation to their brethren of *England*, *Anno* 1647, are worth the repeating in this case: (say they) while in the neighbour kingdom, ‘ The staves of beauty, and bands, covenant, and brotherhood, are broken by many, the horn of malignants
‘ and

‘ and sectaries exalted, the best affected borne down, re-
 ‘ formation ebbing, heresy and schism flowing: It can
 ‘ hardly be marvelled at by any person of prudence and
 ‘ discretion, if we be full of such fears, and apprehen-
 ‘ sions, as use to be in these who dwell near to a house
 ‘ set on fire, or a family infected, especially being taught
 ‘ by the sad experience of the Prelatical times; how
 ‘ easily a gangrene in the one half of this Island may spread
 ‘ through the whole, knowing also the inveterate and
 ‘ insatiable malice of the enemies of this cause and co-
 ‘ venant, against this church and kingdom, which we
 ‘ cannot be ignorant of, unless we would shut our eyes,
 ‘ and stop our ears.’ I might cite many things to this
 purpose out of the public records of both churches and
 nations; but these few I hope do sufficiently witness,
 what were the thoughts and apprehensions of men of
 judgment and understanding in both, but a very few
 years ago, as to the danger of religion in *Scotland* in the
 case of *England’s* being infected with errors and heresies.
 And if there was reason then so to judge, how much more
 now, when besides the vicinity and contiguity of these
 two, and the daily comnerce and correspondency that
 is between the people thereof, *Scotland*, is incorporated
 into one civil body and government with *England*, and
 have also the bar of civil laws for keeping out, and curb-
 ing of many errors and heresies taken away, and tolera-
 tion and protection allowed thereunto, by which it com-
 eth to pass, that the danger which was formerly nigh
 unto us, is now also in our bowels. And to this I shall
 speak in the next place.

Consideration Second.

*From the Infection of Errors and Heresies already begun,
 and the footing that they have already got in this Church
 and Nation.*

THOUGH the plague when near unto us is danger-
 ous, and fire in our neighbour’s house, can hardly
 be kept from taking hold of our own, yet infection in
 our

our own body is more dangerous; and much harder it is to keep our house from burning when the fire hath already seized upon it, and the flames are flashing about our ears; and this is the case that the church of *Scotland*, and religion therein do stand in at this day: Not only have we amongst us many strangers who vent their errors at will, and without controulment, but sundry also of our own church and nation, are come to be infected therewith. The ministry of the land, though differing in that unhappy question about the public resolutions, yet are by the singular mercy and goodness of God, for any thing that yet doth appear, kept sound and unanimous in their judgments against the errors of the times; and so also is the body of the people according to the measure of their knowledge in their several ranks and degrees; neither have sectaries so much cause to boast of their number and growth in *Scotland*, as commonly they do give out; they are (blessed be the God of truth and of mercy for it) as yet but very few, and inconsiderable in comparison to the body of this church, scarce one to a thousand; yet is the infection such, as ought not to be despised or neglected, as threatening no danger to religion and the work of reformation amongst us: Besides sundry others who are infected with errors in several sorts, there being not a few of these monstrously erring-souls, commonly called *Quakers*, who strike at the root of Christian religion, by denying the scriptures to be the word of God, and setting up, and holding forth their own doting fancies, and foolish imaginations, under the name of the light within them, as the infallible dictates of the Spirit of truth, and by denying the in-being of sin, and asserting the perfection of the new creature in the regenerated, even to such a measure of righteousness and holiness, as is equal with that of our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ himself, and by denying the resurrection of the body from the dead, and maintaining many other errors, which though abominable and vile in themselves, yet are boldly vented and actively spread by these persons; and which is more lamentable, sad experience proveth in both nations, that not a few, and these not of the most ignorant and seemingly profane, are apt to receive, and be carried away with these strange delusions: And therefore should we not be so slothful and secure, as to think that religion is not in hazard by the infection already begun amongst us.

The apostle telleth us, *That a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*, 1 Cor. v. 6. And if the church of *Corinth* was in hazard by one incestuous person, sinning against the light of nature, shall we not judge ourselves to be in hazard by some hundreds; the leaven of whose errors is not so four to the natural man's taste. As the infection of the plague of pestilence hath in a little time derived itself into many, and at last brought forth the ruin of great and populous cities and societies, so hath the gangrene of error often spread itself from one or a few members of particular visible churches unto the body of visible professors therein; that from the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there has been little or no soundness, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores. The *Arrian* heresy, which was one of the most dangerous and dreadful, that ever troubled the Christian church, had its beginning from one Presbyter in the church of *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, and yet did run so fast and so far, that in a few years, it did overspread a great part of the Christian world, which made *Jerome* say, that the world did groan and wonder at itself, that it was become *Arian*. We will ordinarily find, that the greatest and most prevailing heresies, have had their rise and original from very small beginnings, and that their authors and abettors have been at first but very few and inconsiderable. If we will not believe our ears, and that which our fathers have told us, yet let us believe our eyes, and that which experience hath taught us. How few and inconsiderable were the sectaries in these nations some eighteen or twenty years ago? And how numerous are they at this day? The *Quakers* (besides many others of several sorts) do boast themselves to be for number sundry ten thousands; And yet I do believe, that within these sixteen years, or little more, scarce were ten single persons of that judgment, heard of in any place of these nations; and their increasing in so short a time to so great a number, may convincingly teach us, that we may and ought to fear the growth and increase of sectaries in *Scotland*, albeit their number for the present be not great: And though haply there be not in every respect, such an aptitude in the people in this nation to receive errors, nor such parts and abilities for spreading of them as in sundry of the *English*, and that we have also the advantage of church-discipline for curbing of them; yet should we not upon such apprehensions

as these, be secure: Errors have got no small footing amongst us already, and if the infection could enter, while the body is more intire and sound; how much more is it like to spread, when sundry of the members are corrupted. If we shall take a view of the many great advantages, that the spirit of error and delusion hath at this time, for strengthening and enlarging itself in this kind, a man that hath but half an eye, may see, that religion is eminently in hazard thereby. Therefore I shall now proceed to speak somewhat unto these.

Consideration Third.

From the Toleration and Protection that is pleaded for, and allowed to many gross Errors and Heresies.

THAT the civil magistrate is appointed of God to take care, not only of these things that do belong unto righteousness, and concern the civil peace, and natural life of man, but also of the things that concern religion, and do respect the glory of God, and the good of souls: And that in subordination to these ends, such outward impediments and obstructions as do hinder the same, ought by him to be removed out of the way, and not to be tolerated in a Christian common-wealth; is a truth so clearly set down in the scriptures, and so fully confirmed in the writings of divines, and so plainly and solemnly engaged unto in the Solemn League and Covenant, that it were needless for me to insist upon the proof thereof: Neither is this my purpose, if any do desire to furnish themselves with scripture and reason, in these things, they will find somewhat for their help in the former Testimony, and in the Warning and Testimony of the reverend Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, lately emitted against that sinful and unseasonable Petition of some of our unhappy country-men to the Parliament of *England*: That which we have to lament, is, That notwithstanding the clear light of the scriptures, and that reason both divine and human, do strongly plead the contrary, and that these nations are solemnly engaged by the public vows of God upon them, without respect of

persons, to endeavour the extirpation of *Popery, Prelacy, Superstition, Heresy, Schism, Prophaneness*; and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine, and to the power of godliness: Yet a very vast toleration is not only pleaded for, and promoted by many, but also framed into a law; by which, protection and encouragement is allowed unto many gross errors and heresies, that do not only deny and destroy many of the beautiful superstructures, but do also strike at not a few of the cornerstones, and chief foundations of Christian religion; which doth minister singular advantage to the spirit of delusion, for strengthening and spreading of itself, unto the corrupting of the truth of God, and subverting of souls. The corrupt nature of man, is of itself most fertile of vain imaginations, and most prone to carnal liberty, and to transgress the bounds, and remove the land-marks that are set unto it of God; so that even when curbed and hemmed in with the rail of his law, and with the utmost extent of the care and diligence, and faithfulness, and zeal, both of spiritual and civil rulers, it can hardly be kept from debording into many gross extravagancies in the things of God, and from turning into its course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. What then can be expected, when not only the yoke is taken off its jaws, but that it is also fostered upon the breasts, and dandled upon the knees of protection, and countenance and encouragement, and suffered to grow up under the warm shadow of civil authority; but that the fountains of the great deep shall be opened up, and overflow the face of the whole land? when Satan is loosed out of his prison, shall he not deceive the nations? and when the serpent's bands are taken off, shall he not cast water out of his mouth as a flood after the woman, that he may cause her to be carried away of the flood? Let us but a little consider, what hath been the fruits of such toleration in these churches and states where it has got footing. I shall not go so far back as to the first ages of the world, in which men being left to themselves in the things of God, *professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.* Neither shall I speak of the condition of religion, in some Protestant states beyond sea, in which toleration is allowed; but I desire it to be considered:

1. How it fared with the church of *Judab* in these periods of time, when toleration got any footing therein: I shall not now stand to debate, whether it was at any time established in *Judab* by a law; but it is clear enough, that when any of the kings of *Judab*, whether through negligence or want of integrity, or upon carnal and politick considerations, did not restrain, but tolerate false prophets, and idolaters, and corrupters of the worship of God, and perverters of his truth, that idolatry, and the leprosy of manifold errors and corruptions, did quickly spread themselves over the face of that church and nation; that if the Lord had not been graciously pleased to raise up some good kings, who in the zeal of God, and conscience of their duty, did employ their power for destroying of idolatry and false worship, and for making the people *serve the Lord God of their fathers, according to the law, and the testimony*; it had fared no better with them, than it did with the church of *Israel*, or of the ten tribes, who came by their sinful neglect of the things of God, and tolerating and protecting of false worship, in a few generations, to lose the substantials of religion, and the very face of a church, and of a state too. What sad instances were of these things in the days of *Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Abaz, Manasseh, Ammon, Jehoiakim, &c.*

2. When about the time of the incarnation of our blessed Lord, and his being on the earth, sundry sects were tolerated in the church of the *Jews*, did they not come at last to be all overgrown with nettles and thorns, and to lose the being and face of a church? It is worthy of observation, that the men of that time, who were zealous patrons of toleration, were in the just judgment of God given up to themselves, to be zealous opposers of the gospel, and to crucify the Lord of glory.

3. It should be considered, what hath already been the sad and dreadful effects of this toleration; is not the glory of God trodden under foot, the precious truths of the gospel corrupted and perverted, the ordinances of Jesus Christ contemned and cried down, the government and discipline of the kirk in a great measure overturned, the worship of God despised and prophaned, the Lord's-day disregarded and casten loose, the power of godliness eaten out, and the whole work of reformation obstructed, and in many things overturned, many

souls subverted, *Popery, Libertinism, Superstition, Heresy, Schism, Scepticism, Atheism, Profaneness*, and many things contrary to sound doctrine, increased? And if there be such a growth of so dreadful evils, in so few years, and whilst that generation is yet living, whom God brought back from the borders of *Babylon*, (to which we were threatened to be carried captive under the corruptions and tyranny of the *Prelate*?) and who have seen the wonderful works of the Lord in that great deliverance, and have lifted up our hands to heaven, to swear by him that liveth, and reigneth for evermore, that we would endeavour the extirpation of these things? What is to be expected if this toleration shall continue, and be transmitted to our posterity, but darkness, instead of divination, and that darkness shall cover the land, and gross darkness the people?

4. Let us suppose, that such a toleration were granted unto men, in the things that relate unto the duties of righteousness, that are commanded in the second table of the law, *viz.* that they might without controulment of the civil authority, and with assurance of protection from the same, walk in these things, according to the dictates of their own spirits, and imaginations, and inclinations of their own hearts; were it possible, that there could be long peace to him that goes out, or to him that cometh in; or that goods, or good name, or chastity, or life, could be long preserved; should not thy whole land in a very short time be filled with rapine, and oppression, and violence, with thefts and robberies, and slanders, with fornications, adulteries, and incests, with blood, and murder, and every sort of abominations? And is there not in the heart of man, as great, if not greater pravity, in order to the duties of the first table, as to these of the second table? Nature's light in our corrupt state, being more eclipsed and depraved in the one, than in the other: Can we then expect any better fruit of this toleration, in order to the things of God, and that do concern religion, than it would produce in reference to the things of men, and that do concern righteousness? Upon this account it is, That as God hath revealed in his word, the rule both of religion and righteousness, according to which he hath commanded us to walk in his matters, and in the matters of men, and not according to the imaginations of our own hearts,

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doing what seemeth good unto us in our own eyes, either in the one or in the other; so hath he appointed civil governments and magistrates among the children of men, that they might be keepers of both tables of his law, and that by keeping of both, they might preserve both religion and righteousness; which do otherwise (without a mighty hand of more than ordinary providence) soon go to ruin, when rulers are not a terror to evil works that are done against both.

5. As toleration doth bring forth the sad fruits already mentioned; so doth the mother and daughter both of them, provoke the Lord to give up men to vile affections, and to give them over to a reprobate mind, to do things not convenient, as appeareth from the last part of the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans; and so bringeth at last the ruin both of religion and righteousness, and destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. All which, with many other obvious considerations, that would be tedious to insist upon, may make it evident to such as will impartially and without prejudice weigh the same in the balance of the Lord's sanctuary, and of reason and experience, that as the spirit of error and delusion hath singular advantage; so religion is in imminent hazard thereby.

Consideration Fourth,

From the ignorance, unfruitfulness, instability, looseness and profanity that do abound in the land at this time.

DANGERS and diseases, whether natural, or moral, or spiritual, are more or less to be feared, according to the weakness or strength, the disposition or indisposition of the object about which they are conversant, to resist or to receive the same. As weak and ill-complexioned bodies are readily obnoxious to sickness, and do soon receive infection; and unwise and unvigilant states are easily deceived and soon broken, and put into confusion; so ignorant, or unstable, or carnal,

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or profane souls, do easily become a prey to temptations, whether in the matter of their profession or of their conversation; their ignorance and want of watchfulness, rendering them blind as to the discovering of the snare; and their want of spiritual life and strength, rendering them impotent and indisposed, as to the avoiding and resisting of it; and their instability and looseness inclining and disposing them to tamper and dally with it: By which it cometh to pass, that they are easily and often intangled, especially in a time of abounding temptations; yea, it is righteous with the Lord, because they do not like to retain him in their knowledge, to give them up to a mind void of judgment; and because they receive not the love of the truth, to send them strong delusion to believe a lie. Hence it was that the world in older times, both before and after the flood, came to be drowned in gross superstition and abominable idolatry; and that a great part of the Christian church in later ages, came to be drowned in Mahometanism and Popery. Now if we shall look through the breadth of our land, may we not find that there are multitudes of ignorant souls, who do scarce know the first and most common principles of the Christian religion, much less have they their senses exercised in the knowledge of the truth, and of the holy scriptures, which are the ground thereof? And how many do sit down satisfied with a very small measure of knowledge, taking many precious and necessary truths upon mere tradition from their ancestors and teachers, without searching the scriptures whether these things be so, that they may attain in themselves a warrantable and well-grounded persuasion thereof? By which it cometh to pass, that sundry such, meeting with deceivers, come to be soon shaken in their minds. Be there not also many simple and unstable souls, who are as reeds shaken with the wind, and apt to be driven to and fro with every wind of doctrine? And be there not many lukewarm and indifferent, and of a carnally politic spirit, who care for none of these things? Be there not many loose and profane? All which are apt to cast off the profession of the truth, and to be easily seduced and drawn away into error; because, though happily many such do not much regard either truth or error, yet when error is like to prevail and come in reputation, and the owning thereof to be attended with carnal or civil advantages, they can easily be induced to shape their
garments,

garments, and wear their cloaths according to the fashion of the time; yea, their carnal minds, which are enmity to God, are also enmity to his truth, and doth dispose them to cast off the yoke thereof; which they are easily persuaded to do, when there is nothing to hinder it but naked respect to the truth itself. Every man is in some sense naturally a heretic, having the seeds of error in his soul, and an aptitude and inclination to bring forth these bitter grapes of wormwood and of gall; and the more that he liveth in formality, and hypocrisy, and looseness; these seeds do in the common body of sin that is in him, receive the more increase and strength, and become the more apt to bring forth their own native fruit. There is also no doubt, a great similitude between errors of judgment and looseness of conversation, and an easy passage from the one to the other. A heretic is easily made vicious and profane, and a vicious and profane man is easily made a heretic. A great part of the Christian world first turned formal and carnal, then *Arian* and *Nestorian*, &c. and in the end *Mahometan*. Do we not see that looseness and profanity in the conversation of sundry, doth easily usher in Popery in their profession; but much more swiftly do such men by swarms decline from the truth and embrace errors, when to their natural inclination and corrupt disposition temporary advantages or disadvantages, the countenance or disrespect, the command or threatening of civil authority, cometh to be super-added. Hence it is, that the bulk of sundry people and nations, have, after receiving and professing the truth, sometimes suddenly shaken it off again, and turned aside into errors; whereof we have many instances, both in sacred and in church-history. Therefore, albeit the truth is for the present professed in purity by the inhabitants of this land; yet, there being amongst the body of the people such a multitude of ignorant, lukewarm, unstable, loose souls, who have lived and grown up in these sins for many years together, under the light of the gospel, as they may be easily made a prey to the temptations unto error and delusion that do already abound among us, so there is just cause to fear, that if the Lord shall, for the further punishment of our provocations, give us up into the hand of a popish or heretical power; who should enjoin their profession by law, that many such would soon turn popish or heretical.

cal. And whether this may not be our lot to be exercised with such a trial, I leave it to wise men to judge.

Consideration Fifth.

From the great decay of a true public spirit, and of diligence, and zeal, and watchfulness in the things of God; and from the great increase of a spirit of sloth, and neutrality, and security amongst us.

THOUGH in the things of God it be eminently true, that *except the Lord build the house, the builder buildeth in vain, except the Lord keep the city, the watchman watcheth in vain*: Yet doth he call upon, and command his people to be zealous for his house, and to be faithful and watchful in the things that relate thereunto. The blessing is his, and the duty is ours: And as it is a token for good when his people are cordial and active for his interests; so it is a prognostic of ruin and decay when they become neutral and indifferent, and deal with a slack hand, and wax secure in the midst of dangers. In speaking to this, it is not my purpose to charge backsliding upon any party or person in the land, upon the account of public differences; I think, that without reflecting upon these, or giving offence to any that are concerned therein upon one hand or another, that taking the body of this church complexly, it may be truly said, that there is a great decay of a true public spirit, and of former integrity and diligence, zeal and watchfulness for the things of God amongst us; and that no party are so insensible of their own guilt, or so tenacious of their own innocency, that they will deny this. I do not speak as to appearing or acting in civil capacities, the Lord having broken our civil government to pieces, and cast bye our governors as broken vessels, whercof he maketh no use for the defence and preservation of religion; but what a decay is upon us as to many of these things that do beseem us as Christians, especially in such an hour of temptation; and when the public cause of God, and all the precious interests of Jesus Christ and of his

kingdom

kingdom, are in so imminent hazard. It is true, that every man hath his gifts and station assigned him of God, according to the measure and bounds of which, without over-reaching, (a thing too common in these evil days) he is to demean himself. But it is also true, that all of us being members of the body of Christ, and having an interest in the things that concern his kingdom, we ought to be so far of public spirits, as not only cordially to wish well unto, and pray for the common interest thereof, but also according to the talents we have received of him, and in our station, and as we are thereunto called of God, to put forth ourselves cheerfully and actively for the good of the same whether by doing or suffering. The public cause and work of God was wont to be precious and dear unto us; and the time was when no pains, nor expence, nor hazard was declined, for preserving or promoting thereof: we were wont to stir up ourselves, and to stir up one another, and to wrestle with God in prayer and supplication together, and apart, for setting up of Jerusalem, and making her a praise in the earth. The time was, when upon the appearing of any danger to religion, though haply but afar off, and far inferior to many dangers that are now within our bowels, seasonable and clear warning was given thereof by the body of the watchmen in the land and many private Christians made it their work to deal seriously with God in the secret watches of the night, for preventing of the same, and many were found of every rank and condition throughout the land, who did readily put forth themselves in their stations and callings to prevent future, and remove present prejudices to religion. The time was, when the things of God were more minded and sought than our own things; his matters were wont to have the preference in all public councils and transactions amongst us; and as public motions and overtures did tend to the promoting or prejudicing of the things of God; so they were wont to be entertained or rejected in public meetings. Civil interests were wont to be carried on in subordination to these that are spiritual; our own safety and security were wont to be minded, in subordination to the safety and security of religion, and of the kingdom of Jesus Christ; but now such a public and tender, and vigilant spirit is in a great measure gone, from amongst us; and instead thereof, neutrality, and indifferency, and carnal

security possess many, as to what concerneth religion and the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and to many it seemeth to be but of small concernment, whether the Lord's matters sink or swim; many seek their own things, and study to secure themselves, and their own matters, but few seek the things of Jesus Christ, or care for the preserving or securing of his interest. Is it not for a lamentation, that in the public meetings which have been kept in the several shires of this nation these eight or nine years past, there hath been little or no care, or resentment of religion, or of the work of God, but these things have been in a great measure forgotten or laid aside, as if we were not a people devoted to the Lord; or, as if religion were nothing of our concernment; or as if all that care did belong to ministers only? On these it is indeed in a special way incumbent to take care thereof; and would to God, that all of us who bear that name, did endeavour to be faithful and vigilant in this hour of tentation. There is no doubt but we, even we also, have our own faintings and failings as to many things that are called for in such a day, and that our breaches have both weakened ourselves, and blunted and stumbled others: But surely neither all the fault, nor all the duty is ours only. As the several ranks and estates of the land were honoured of God to be eminently instrumental both in the beginning and progress of the work of reformation for sundry years together; so there is no question but it is still incumbent to them in duty, in their several stations and callings, according to the oath of God in the covenant, really, constantly and sincerely, all the days of their life, to endeavour the preservation of the reformed religion in the church of *Scotland*, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government; and not to give themselves over to indifferency and neutrality thereanent, or to give themselves to be possessed with a spirit of carnal security and negligence in reference thereunto. I do not doubt but the conscience and care of their duty is upon the hearts of some of all ranks in the land; but who can deny, that a spirit of security and neutrality hath prevailed upon many: Flesh and blood, and carnal wisdom will not want excuses in these matters: But if we shall enter into the sanctuary of the Lord, and weigh it in his balance, it cannot be excused, that the covenant and cause of God, that religion and the interests of Jesus Christ should be so much forgotten and

laid aside ; and that there should be so small repentment of the injuries that are done thereunto ; and that no security nor remedy against the encroachments that are made thereupon, and the dangers that threaten the same should be so much as propounded or desired. How far is this from that which we were once at ? And is there not cause to fear, that because of this lukewarmness, God shall spue us out of his mouth, as he threateneth to do unto the church of Laodicea, because she was neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm in the matters of God, Rev. iii. 16.

Consideration Sixth.

From the divisions that are amongst us.

WHILST I am speaking of these dangers that are intestine, and do minister advantage to the spirit of error and delusion ; I cannot overpass our divisions, that being a danger that is none of the smallest. It is the assertion of our blessed Lord Jesus, which reason and experience do verify, that *a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand* ; and how sad are these divisions which are in Scotland at this day ? I shall not insist on these that do concern civil government, which yet (wherever they are) have no small influence upon things religious ; men being oftentimes apt to follow that way, even in the things of God, that seemeth most to contribute for setting up or settling these civil governments or governors which their hearts do most affect ; and their endeavours thereanent, together with the reciprocal endeavours of these governors themselves, having oftentimes no small tendency unto the altering or changing somewhat in religion : but waving these things, Is there not difference and division amongst us, even in order to things religious, *viz.* the discipline and government of the church, and the covenant, and a great part of the late work of reformation, &c ? It is true, there hath been external subjection in these things by the body of the inhabitants of this land ; but it were to shut our eyes

and to befool ourselves in the clear day, to think, that all these who did externally subject thereunto, before the year 1650, do now approve thereof; the practices and profession of many witnessing the contrary; some being openly fallen off to Independency; some to Anabaptism; some to Quakerism; and many being fraught with the old malignant enmity against the covenant and work of reformation, and the discipline and government of the church; speaking evil of, and reproaching these things at their pleasure, and making it manifest, that they would be glad of any means and opportunity to bear down and overturn the same: And how sad are these divisions that are amongst us of the ministry? How are the watchmen who ought to see with one eye, and to speak with one tongue, and to bear with one shoulder, divided amongst ourselves? It is not my purpose, at present, to discover the fountain of this evil, or to impute the guilt thereof to one rather than to another; neither do I mean from the bad consequences of our divisions, to debate innocency and truth into silence, or to persuade to an union upon any terms, though with the increase of our sin against God, and with the greater prejudice of his work, and with more offence to the consciences of these that are truly tender and godly; but simply to hold forth that division doth, in many respects, threaten danger to religion and the ordinances of Jesus Christ amongst us, that so the true causes and right cure thereof may be searched into, and studied.

1. It giveth advantage to adversaries to cast slanders and imputations upon our church and the government thereof, as having (if they may be believed) little or nothing of that unity and peace, and love that becometh the true church and pastors of Jesus Christ.

2. It doth lay a stumbling-block in the way not only of ignorant, carnal and profane men, to make them cast at religion and reformation; but also of some less knowing and weak amongst the godly, who are brought to doubt which way to follow, whilst they see some learned and godly ministers pleading for one thing, and others also learned and godly pleading for another.

3. It doth much harden and confirm such of that party in the land, who formerly opposed the work of reformation, and do retain their enmity thereto, that it is not a work that hath been of God, as having no consistence

tence, nor concord with itself, but like to pull down and destroy itself by the divisions that are among the chief instruments thereof.

4. It doth divert the judicatories of the kirk, and the members thereof, from employing themselves against the common adversaries, and promoting the exercises and power of godliness.

5. It maketh discipline and church censures sundry times to be disregarded, as not proceeding from Presbyteries and Synods jointly, but oftentimes in a divided way.

6. It breedeth sundry inconveniencies in the planting of churches, sometimes obstructing the plantation for sundry years together; sometimes planting them with men not satisfyingly qualified; sometimes making two differing plantations in one congregation, by which, both the ministers and the people come to be divided, or the dissatisfied party, if they cannot win at a minister, to be casten loose, and left without a ministry and the benefit of the public ordinances.

7. The door is thereby shut sundry times against sundry able and godly expectants, who are thereby kept from entering into the ministry.

8. Advantage is thereby given to disaffected people in some congregations, to separate and withdraw from their own lawful pastors, and either to cast themselves loose of the ordinances, or else to call and set up others in an in disorderly way.

9. It doth retard and obstruct the purging of the church from insufficient and scandalous ministers and elders, who do shelter themselves, and are but taken too little notice of, under these differences and divisions.

10. It doth occasion men in the heat of their debates, anent these differences, to run too far upon the asserting and venting of things for the defence of their own opinions and judgments, that may prove seeds and inlets to tenets and evils that are of greater and more dangerous consequence.

11. It doth in no small measure alienate the minds, and estrange the hearts and affections of good men one from another, and weaken them in their prayers before God one for another, and in that confidence and cordialness that they should have in their joint carrying on of common end uncontroverted duties; all which, as they are

are present prejudices to religion and the work of God; so being continued, are like to prove more and more dangerous and destructive thereunto.

Consideration Seventh.

From the Attempts and Assaults that are made by many upon the Ordinances of Jesus Christ.

AS this inferior world without the light of the sun, would be but a mass of darkness and confusion, so would the church militant without ordinances; and as food is necessary for preserving of the life of the body, so hath God appointed, that in our pilgrim condition here below, the soul's life should depend upon the use of his ordinances: What is religion but a conscientious worshipping of God, after the manner, and in the use of the ordinances prescribed by himself? And yet I do not know, if in any generation the ordinances of God have been more directly struck at, than they are by many in these nations at this day: I shall pass that fanatick generation of *Familists*, that cry down all worship and ordinances, as things below a saints condition, sundry of which as wandering stars be travelling up and down these lands: But let us a little consider what attempts and assaults are made by many against the word of God, and the preaching thereof, against the sacraments, against the Lord's-day, against the ministry, and against the discipline and government of the church; which things are the very pillars of religion, that being destroyed, religion cannot but vanish and turn into nothing. As to the holy word of God contained in the scriptures of truth; there be not only sundry *Jesuits* and *Seminary-Priests* lurking in sundry places of the land, who cry down the perfection and authority of the scriptures, and the reading thereof in our vulgar tongue, and the Bibles which are in people's hands, as false, and corrupt, and heretical translations, and do commend unto them the authority of the church of *Rome*, and her traditions, for the ground of salvation, and the old Latin version for the

the authentic text of the scripture, and the Bible of *Doway* for the best and purest *English* version, and all our public worship as corrupt; but we have also the whole tribe of the *Quakers* concurring and conspiring to the utmost of their power, to cry down the divinity and authority of the written word of God, and to persuade such as will believe them, that the scriptures have no authority over men's consciences, and that no command in scripture that was given to others, doth bind us, save what we have an impulse upon our own spirits for, and that every man in the world hath a light within him, sufficient to guide him unto salvation, without the help of any outward light or discovery, and that the dictates of this inward light, are the infallible dictates of the Spirit of God, which every one is bound to hearken unto. This, as it is one of the most impudent, so it is one of the most compendious ways that ever was taken by Satan, for striking at the root of Christian religion, and banishing of it out of the world. If the scriptures be not the word of God, what have we for the ground of our faith, and rule of our duty? The light that is within us, when not derived from, and founded upon, and agreeable unto the law and the testimony, is but darkness, and leadeth us unto as many by-paths of division and destruction, as our corrupt fancy can devise, or the father of lies suggest unto us: Neither are these men any greater friends to the sacraments instituted and appointed by Jesus Christ under the gospel: they cry down baptism with water, and the Lord's Supper, as being but types and shadows ceasing upon the appearance of Christ within them. The *Anabaptists* also, tho' they do not simply deny or oppugn the ordinance of baptism, yet by denying and oppugning the baptism of infants, born within the visible church, they do not only at one dash un-baptize and un-church all the thousands of our *Israel*, but do also leave our children and posterity, in regard of any covenant-privilege, or seal, in little or no better condition, than these of Infidels or Pagans; and how prevailing an opinion and party this is in these nations at this day, is manifest enough. The Lord's day, though a moral and divine institution, and generally acknowledged in the churches of Christ, to be the key of religion, and that ordinance which keepeth all the rest in life and being, by separating us one day of every week from the world and worldly businesses, to be solemnly

solemnly set apart and exercised in religious duties, chiefly these that concern the public worship of God, in the public assemblies of his people; yet is by many of the sectaries of this time, also cried down, and the keeping thereof, slighted and opposed, which being added to that natural averfeness and enmity that is in the hearts of all carnal and profane men, (the number of which in all quarters of our land is not small) unto the giving or keeping a day unto the Lord, threaten no small danger unto this most necessary and divine institution, and to the whole public worship of God. What is more like to take with worldly-minded men, and wanton persons, and carnal libertines, than this, that all days are alike, and that the Lord's-day is but a device of man, and a yoke, and a bondage upon the necks of the disciples, from which they ought to deliver themselves? This being one of the things which carnal hearts do most desire and hunt after: When carnal liberty getteth conscience upon its side, and carnal and licentious practices get under the shadow of religious opinions, they do then wax bold as lions, and tear in pieces the precious truths and commandments of God, that stand in their way; and thus it is like to prove in the matter of the Lord's-day. And not only are ministers had in derision, and contempt, and railed upon, and reviled as deceivers, thieves, robbers, *Baal's* priests, conjurers, Antichrists, witches, devils, *Symons*, serpents, bloody Herodians, scarlet-coloured beasts, *Babylon's* merchants, wolves, dogs, swine, *Sodomites*, murders, ministers of darkness, cursed speakers, *Cain's* stock, vagabonds, who walk in the way of *Cain*, *Balaam* and *Core*, and what not, that a malicious heart can invent, and a violent tongue utter; but the ordinance of the ministry itself is also cried down, as altogether needless, and burdensome to the Lord's people under the gospel, who (if some of these men may be believed) have no need of any outward teaching, by reading or hearing the scriptures opened or applied, that light within them being sufficient to teach them in the knowledge of the will of God: As to all these things that concern their duty and salvation, or as others of these men will have it, all of them are warranted to be teachers themselves, and that a peculiar office of a teaching or preaching ministry, is no ordinance of Christ: Or, if any such be, that they are not to be by any mediate call from man, but by an immediate call from God, and

and the peculiar instinct of the Holy Ghost. I may add to these things, the general disrespect and disesteem that prevaileth on the hearts, and appeareth in the carriage of disaffected and profane men, to the ministry; together with a strong inclination that is in many, to have ministers according to their own hearts, who will speak smooth things unto them, and heal their hurt slightly; and that the maintenance of intrants to the ministry, to which there was wont to be free and legal access by virtue of their ordination, is now seized upon by their civil power, who do not allow it to any, but upon condition of their declaring their resolution to live peaceably under the present government: And for the discipline and government of the church; not only are the civil laws that concern the upholding thereof, and giving obedience thereunto, repealed, and liberty allowed to all these who are pleased to speak or write against it, or withdraw their subjection therefrom; but other sorts also of kirk discipline and government that are destructive thereunto, are set up and promoted, and protected, and countenanced amongst us. These things being so, is it not past all question, that the pillars of religion, which is wisdom's house, are in hazard to be overthrown by the malicious and subtile devices of Satan? And that it is high time for us to awake, and see our danger, lest, ere we be aware, we be spoiled of the precious treasure of the gospel, and blessed ordinances of Jesus Christ, by which we live, and in which is the life of our souls.

Danger Eight.

From the Growth and Increase of Popery in the Land.

THAT the Pope and his party have these many many years past, had a special eye upon *Britain*, and upon this nation as a part thereof, for reducing the same into the obedience of the See of *Rome*, is better known than that I need to insist upon the proof of it; and therefore hath he always had his emissaries the *Jesuits* and *Seminary-priests*, travelling up and down in
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this Island, under diverse masks, for perverting of souls, and setting plots and conspiracies on foot, for compassing that design. How much their hopes were heightened, and in what a fair way they were for bringing it about, before the year 1638. is fresh in remembrance: And although these hopes were in a great measure blasted by the reformation, then begun in *Scotland*, and prosperously carried on in both nations for sundry years thereafter; yet are they now again revived under our present distempers and confusions, which (especially by reason of the vast toleration of errors and heresies, of which I have already spoke) do minister unto Papists great and singular advantages, for promoting and compassing their design. Not only is liberty afforded them to vent most part of the popish doctrine, (which keeping off the Pope's supremacy, and the popish hierarchy, with some other things of that kind, they may do without hazard) but these penal statutes and laws, which concern men's coming to church, and attending the word and sacraments, &c. being taken away; they have liberty to withdraw themselves from the ordinances and means of conviction and instruction, and may keep their own private meetings with their ghostly fathers at home, without regard to the censures of the church; and in the mean while *Jesuits* and *Seminary-priests*, come not a few of them into the country, and do import, or cause to be imported, numbers of popish pamphlets, which are industriously spread, and put into the hands of such as they perceive in any measure inclinable to their way, or by reason of their malignant disposition, to be in dislike with the covenant, or the government and discipline of the church, or any part of the work of reformation, or to be ignorant or loose in their conversation: Neither are sundry of them wanting in the mean while, to the utmost of their power, by subtle and fair speeches, to draw away such from the purity of their profession, and to instil into them, the love of the way of the church of *Rome*, as that which was the religion of our fore-fathers. Not a few papists also, who had formerly left the country, because of the strictness of the laws, do now return home again, and others who staid at home, and did profess subjection and conformity to the church, do now withdraw and openly avow themselves to be papists: Neither is their advantage small by the remnant of the malignant and Prelatical party, that

is yet amongst us: These also having a great enmity against the covenant and government of the church, and the work of reformation: And there being in sundry things a great sympathy between these parties, and a great similitude in their principles and ways, and a deal of readiness to correspond together, and to countenance one another: By these means, and such as these, it comes to pass, that popery grows and spreads in several places of the land from year to year; to which if we shall add, the correspondence that Papists have with, and the encouragements they have from their friends abroad; together with the design (which hath been long a hatching) of the popish leaguers beyond sea, of invading *Britain* as the strongest bulwark of the protestant cause, that it being brought under, they may the more easily make a prey of the rest of the Protestant states and churches; and that this invasion is like to be stated upon such a quarrel, and carried on under such a pretext as will engage the affection and assistance of some, and blunt the opposition of others: Do not all these things, put together, much heighten the danger of the true Protestant religion in *Scotland*?

Danger Ninth.

From our Guiltiness in many of these things for which the Lord threateneth to depart, and remove his candlestick.

I HAVE spoke to sundry sins that do abound amongst us, as they do weaken the soul, in resisting of temptations, and in following of these duties that are necessary, for preserving of religion in its purity and power, and as inlets to dispose unto things, that are contrary and destructive thereunto. I shall now resume some of these sins, and add thereunto some others, whereof we are in a great measure guilty, for which the Lord threateneth to depart, and to remove his candlestick. The first I name, is, That gross ignorance of the gospel, and of the necessary truths of God that possesseth

itudes of our land in this clear gospel-day, and under the plenty of the means of knowledge. Is not this the condemnation of many, that light is come amongst us, and that they love darkness rather than light? the ignorance of many is affected and perverse, and therefore without excuse: Is there not cause to fear that dreadful word, *It is a people of no understanding, Therefore he that made them, will have no mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no favour,* Isa. xxvii. 11. ? And that of another of the prophets, *Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee,* Jer. vi. 8. ? The second, is, The abounding and prevailing formality that is amongst us, or a form of godliness without the power thereof; because of this, the Lord threatens to send delusion, strong delusion upon a people that they may believe a lie, 2 Theff. ii. 10, 11, 12. yea, to chuse their delusions, and bring their fears upon them, Isa. lxvi. 3, 4. And do not such delusions seem to be the proper plague of these nations at this time, chosen and sent of God for punishing our formality? Hath there been at any time more strong delusion, whether we look into the multiplicity and monstrosity of the errors that are hatched and vented, or multitude of the persons that have come quickly to be infected therewith? This is doubtless a piece of the hour and power of darkness, wherein Satan is loosed out of his prison, and is gone forth to deceive these nations, and when delusions are chosen and sent of God, and the holy One doth in his spotless and righteous providence, for punishing the sins of men, say to the lying spirit, who offers himself to be the minister of enticing souls, go forth, and thou shalt prevail; have not all of us reason to tremble and fear, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall,* 1 Cor. x. 12. The third, is, barrenness, and unfruitfulness under the gospel, for which the Lord threatens to take away the hedge of his vineyard, and it shall be eaten up; to break down the wall thereof and it shall be trodden down; to lay it waste, and it shall not be pruned nor digged, Isa. v. 6, 7. A charge is given by the Master of the vineyard, to cut down the fig-tree that yielded no fruit for three years, Luke xiii. 7. And the apostle telleth us, *That the earth that drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth nothing but thorns and thistles, is rejected and near unto cursing,* Heb. vi. 8. And is not this in an eminent measure the sin

of our land, that notwithstanding the Lord doth plentifully water us with the dew of heaven, and with the sweet rain of the gospel, day by day, yet are we, as to most of us an empty vine, that bringeth forth fruit unto ourselves, but not unto God?

The fourth is, Slighting, loathing and wearying of the precious things of God, and the blessed opportunities thereof, and preferring our own carnal and worldly advantages thereunto, for which the Lord threatens that he will cause the sun go down at noon-day, and that he will darken the earth in the clear day, and that he will send a famine of hearing the words of the Lord, and that his people shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it, Amos viii. 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12. And this sin also reigneth among us. How many lothe the ordinances, and slight the opportunities thereof? How many weary of the Lord's day, and halve it between God and the world? How is our blessed Lord Jesus and the inestimable treasure of the gospel valued by many at a very low rate, many times less than thirty pieces of silver? that he may justly take up that sad complaint, *A goodly price that I was prized at of them*, Zach. xi. 13. and break his statutes and be gone.

The fifth is, Refusing to hearken unto God, for which my God, saith the prophet Hosea, chap. ix. 17. *will cast them away*. Are we not a rebellious and gain-saying people, who neither fear the threatenings of God to repent, nor entertain his promises to believe, nor regard his commandments to obey? and may not the Lord upbraid us as he did these cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not, and bring upon us the judgments and desolation threatened in that place? Matth. xi. 21, 22, 23, 24. May he not because of our unbelief, cut us off as he did the church of the Jews, Rom. xi. 20.? Doth not their example call upon us not to be high-minded, but to fear? May he not, because of our disobedience, and that so many of us do refuse to suffer him to reign over us, pass upon us that sad sentence that is recorded, Luke xix. 27?

The sixth is, That which is written as the sin of the prophets, Jer. vi. 14. Ezek. xiii. 10, 16, 22. chap. xxxiv. 18, 19, 20, 21. Mic. iii. 5. for which the Lord threatens that night shall be unto them, and that they shall

shall not have a vision, that it shall be dark unto them, that they shall not divine, and that the sun shall go down over them. I do not intend the application of this to any upon the account of public differences; but without respect to parties or differences, it can hardly be denied, that though (blessed be God for it) there be in the land many precious ministers of both judgments who study to divide the word of God aright, warning the wicked to turn from the evil of their ways, and encouraging the godly in the pursuit and practice of godliness, and speak a word in season to weary souls: Yet there be not a few who heal the hurt of the daughter of the Lord's people slightly, and do speak peace to these to whom the Lord doth not speak peace; who thrust with the side and the shoulder, and bite with the teeth those who ought to be encouraged and comforted.

It is sadly bemoaned by the serious seekers of God in many places of the land, that the work of some ministers is, not to commend themselves to every man's conscience as in the sight of God; but to handle the word of God deceitfully, in making sad the hearts of the righteous by turning the edge of their doctrine against them, under the notion of hypocrites and sectaries, and such like; and in strengthening the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life; by which it cometh to pass, that sundry of the people in sundry congregations, do bless themselves in their hearts, and say, that they *shall have peace, though they walk in the imagination of their hearts, adding drunkenness to thirst*; and that the few seekers of God that are in these congregations, or in the country about, are looked upon by such as the vilest and most hateful of men, and their way more scarred at than that of the drunkard, or the common swearer; because of this there is cause to fear that the Lord shall accomplish the threatening of the prophet, by sending darkness instead of divination.

The *seventh* is, Dealing treacherously with God in the matter of his covenant, for which the Lord threateneth dreadful desolation, Deut. xxix. 22, 23, 24, 25. And in many scriptures besides, which threatenings he hath eminently verified against the church of the Jews, who because of breach of covenant were cast out of his sight many hundred years ago, and have continued in that doleful and desolate condition unto this day; and

are not we, even we also, these who have been unstedfast, and have dealt falsely in the covenant of God? I shall not descend into particulars about which there may be difference; but sure I am, that cleaving unto God, and close walking with him, and zeal for the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and against the open enemies and adversaries thereof, and the reforming of ourselves and our followers in our several stations and capacities, will be denied by none, to be amongst the great ends, whether of our baptismal covenant, or of our national covenant, or of the solemn league and covenant. And that every tender heart among us, will also acknowledge, that most of us have not only come exceedingly short, but most palpably and grossly transgressed in order to all these things, in so far that the very obligation thereunto, is not only forgotten, but trodden under foot of many; a sin that is much heightened by the greatness of the Lord's mercies and wonderful works manifested and done in our behalf, in the contriving and carrying on of these covenants, and by the openness and solemnity of our way, in engaging ourselves thereunto. We may say, that because of the oath of the covenant the land mourneth, and that God hath a great and sore controversy with us for this thing, and that there is just cause to fear, that as he hath begun, so he will continue to pursue the quarrel thereof, until he bring darkness and desolation upon us, unless mercy shall prevent us, by giving us to repent and turn again to himself.

The eight, is, forsaking our first love, for which the Lord threatens to remove the candlestick of the church of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 4. which may also breed us great fear, that our candlestick shall be removed; and that upon these two grounds, first, because we have in a great measure left our first love, and declined from our former attainments. I shall not compare this generation of our church with the generation of our fathers; I mean, those who did shake off the yoke of the Roman Antichrist, and embrace the light of the gospel, from whose zeal we are far degenerated; but let us compare ourselves with ourselves, I mean what we are now with what we once were, and that but a very few years ago, and see if there be not cause to say, we have left our first love. I shall name but a few particulars, *first*, There was in our love not long ago a tender respect to all the precious truths of God, with a fervent desire and serious endeavour

your of attaining and possessing them in their purity, which brought forth a deal of abhorrence and indignation against every thing that tended unto the leavening or corrupting of the same. What if the toleration that is now amongst us, had been but moved in *Scotland* some ten years ago? Would it have been brooked with so many close mouths, and with so many dry eyes as it is this day? *Secondly*, There was in our love a wonderful zeal for the privileges of the church, and for Christ's visible kingdom amongst us, that these might not be encroached upon, nor borne down by the powers of the world. But now we can hear and see sad encroachments made upon these, and say little or nothing against it, either before God or men. *Thirdly*, There was in our love a great deal of zeal against that bitter root of malignancy; I mean, that which is so diametrically opposite to godliness, and to the kingdom of Jesus Christ; but now it getteth leave to grow up kindly under our shadow; and many are so favourable to it that they will scarce once name it, or suffer it to be named. *Fourthly*, There was in our love a holy severity in the exercise of church-discipline for purging of the house of God, especially against corrupt church-officers; but that is now in a great measure slacked and gone. *Fifthly*, There was in our love much Christian and cordial respect one to another, which brought forth sweet union, concord and harmony in the judicatories of the kirk, and amongst the ministers of the house of God: but now we bite and devour one another. I might also name the abating of our love to the ordinances, and to holy duties, and to Christian fellowship and tenderness of conversation.

But passing these, I come to the other ground of fear, and that is, That we seem to be much more fallen from our first love at this day, than the church of Ephesus was fallen from her's, when God threatened to remove her candlestick. Let us look upon the text, and see what Ephesus then was; *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, saith Jesus Christ unto her, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.* Do we deserve so great a testimony as this? Or are we not far short in all these things? Where are our works, and where is our labour and patience, and where is our zeal
against

against these that are evil? Are we not a barren and fruitless people? Is not our way the way of the sluggard, and full of murmuring and fretting? Do we not bear with many who are evil, and do we not suffer many to go without trial, who say they are pastors, and are not? Do we not decline the cross of Jesus Christ, and refuse to bear and labour for his name? And do we not either faint or turn aside to crooked ways? And shall we in all these things fall so far short of Ephesus, and of her carriage, even when the removal of her candlestick was threatened, and yet not fear the removal of our candlestick? If we deal impartially with ourselves, by considering all these our provocations which I have already named, and many more that are but too obvious and would be tedious to insist upon, we cannot but be affrighted that the Lord shall depart from amongst us; yea, he hath in no small measure departed already, and this is that to which I shall speak somewhat in the next place.

Danger Tenth.

That the Lord who is our light, life and strength, is in no small measure departed from us, and hath smitten us with many plagues of heart.

THE presence and appearances of God amongst a people, are either such as do concern them simply, as men united together in civil society under civil government, in order to righteousness and peace, or such as concern them as Christian men united in a church state, under ecclesiastic and spiritual government, in order to truth and holiness. Of the first sort are these which are manifested in the common operations and effects of the Spirit, when he giveth unto them the gifts of knowledge, wisdom, fortitude, temperance, justice, courage and such like, in reference to civil administrations, and blesteth and prospereth them in the exercise thereof; so the Lord was with Cyrus, whose right hand he did hold to subdue nations before him, and to loose the loins of kings, and to open before him the two-leaved gates, &c. Isa. xlv. 1. &c. Of the other sort are either these which are manifested in the more peculiar operations and effects of his Spirit, (which yet are but common in opposition to saving grace) when he giveth

unto his people the gift of prophecy, or ministry, or teaching, or exhortation, or church-ruling, and countenanceth them in the exercise thereof, for perfecting of the saints, and edifying of the body of Christ, Rom. xii. 6, 7. Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12. or else these which are manifested in the special operations of his renewing spirit, when he giveth sanctifying and saving grace, and by his continued breathings thereupon, maketh his people to be more and more renewed in the inward man day by day; so he was with his servant Paul in the midst of all his tribulations and afflictions, 2 Cor. iv. 16. and according to the measure of the appearances or withdrawings of God in these things; so do the matters of his people, whether civil, ecclesiastic or spiritual, prosper or decay. Now in reference to all these, God is in no small measure departed from amongst us, and hath left us under a cloud of desertion, and smitten us with sundry plagues of heart. As to civil administrations, wisdom and understanding courage, strength and success were taken from us, and the Lord did smite us with blindness, confusion and astonishment, and trembling of heart; wisdom was not to be found with the antient, nor understanding and counsel with the prudent. He mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of us, that caused us to err in every work. He went not forth with our armies, and therefore our princes became like harts that find no pasture, and that fly before the pursuer; and the men of might did not find their hands, but became like unto women that were affrighted and did fear, because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts which he shook over our land. He made all our strong-holds to be like fig-trees with the first ripe figs which fall into the mouth of the eater when they are shaken, and the gates of our land to be set open to our enemies; and his hand was against us until he had taken from us the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prudent, the whole stay of armies and staff of our civil government: neither is his wrath in these things turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. Our nobles are not of ourselves, nor do our governours proceed from the midst of us, but strangers do bear rule over us, and the home-born sons are broken as the breaking of a potter's vessel that is broken to pieces; so that there is not found in the bursting of it, a heard to take fire from the hearth, or to take water out of the pit. Neither is the Lord's departure small in reference to our church and church-administrations. He

forely cracked if not broken to pieces both the staves, the staff of beauty and the staff of bands, the unity and authority of pastors and church-judicatories; he hath divided us in his anger, and poured contempt upon us, and tho' we have essayed to heal our wound and recover our strength, yet have all our essays hitherto, for most part, been frustrated of the Lord. Do we not come together many times for the worse and not for the better? Is there not bruising instead of binding up, and much bitter contention and strife in many of our meetings? Instead of the sweet fruits of an edifying union and peace, whilst we should draw with one shoulder in the work of the Lord, do not some draw one way and others another, rendering our endeavours almost useles to the church, comfortles to ourselves, and despicable to others? Hath not God in his holy and just indignation mingled somewhat of a perverse spirit in the midst of us? and are we not full of the fury of the Lord, and of the rebuke of our God? We wait for light, but behold obscurity, for brightness, but we walk in darkness; we grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes, we stumble at noon-day as in the night, we are in desolate places as dead men, we look for judgment, but there is none, for salvation, but it is far from us. And is not the Lord's hand also upon his ordinances, to restrain and withhold the blessing thereof; in this respect much is sown and little brought in. The word of salvation, as to any sensible evidence thereof, is but rarely blessed in the hand of the ministers unto the converting of souls, and turning men from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. It is the complaint of faithful ministers in many places of the land, that they labour in vain and spend their strength for nothing; yea, how doleful and dreadful is the withering and decay that is upon many souls who lay claim to conversion and a real interest in Jesus Christ? The generation of the righteous in the land do bemoan this thing, and complain, day by day, that light is darkned, that life is withered, that strength is abated, that presence is evanished, that tenderness is gone, that influences are withholden, that prayer is restrained and shut out, that faith faileth, that love is grown cold, that hearts are hardened as stones, that there is little or no delight in God or in his word, or in the fellowship of his people, that corruptions are aloft, and heart plagues do abound, that God hideth his face and is as a stranger unto his people, and leaveth them to wrestle alone in their duties and difficulties;

so that to deny the withdrawals of God from his people, were to deny what they feel written upon their hearts, and upon their way in a continued tract of sad experiences now for a long time. And yet whilst it is confessedly thus, How little ado is there for his departings; even among those who are convinced, and do acknowledge that he is in a great measure gone? some remembrance there is of a better condition, whilst we did enjoy his fellowship, and his countenance did shine upon us, and some light to discover our loss and the evils that do attend it, which bring a sort of desire to recover our former state; but these how faint and feckless are they? and how many of us are in a manner content to live without God, and to suffer him to be gone without taking hold on the skirts of his garments? It may justly be said, that *we do fade as a leaf, and that our iniquities like the wind do take us away*, and that there be few among us that call upon his name, or stir up themselves to take hold on him; for he hath hid his face from us, and doth consume us because of our iniquities. If his gracious influences were strong upon our hearts, we would not, we could not easily brook his departing, nor would we, or could we be satisfied, or hold our peace, night and day, until he did return and revive his work, and renew his strength, and repair the ruins and build up the breaches of his people; and our sitting almost satisfied and silent under his withdrawals, doth say, that many of us, tho' we have a name that we are living, yet we are dead, and that the spiritual life which remains in others is ready to die; which things do say, that our gourd is withering at the root, that religion is wounded at the heart, and smitten in its vitals, in the spiritual powers of the soul; all which, if the Lord breathe not from above, by pouring out his spirit from on high, will soon make any fruit or leaves of profession that do remain without, to wither and decay, and leave us like Nebuchadnezzar, his tree, which by the command of the Watcher and holy One that came down from heaven, was hewn down, and had it's branches cut, and it's leaves shaken, and it's fruit scattered, and the beasts driven from under it, and the fowls from its branches, and the stump of its roots only left in the earth, bound with a band of iron and of brass, until seven times did pass over it.

COLLECTION
 OF VERY VALUABLE
 SERMONS

Preached on several SUBJECTS and in divers Places in the time of the Late PERSECUTION.

By these EMINENT SERVANTS of JESUS CHRIST, Messrs JOHN KID, JOHN KING, JOHN WELCH, JOHN BLACKADDER, JOHN DICKSON, and GABRIEL SEMPLE.

COLLECTED and TRANSCRIBED from different MANUSCRIPTS, by JOHN HOWIE; and Published at the request of those who desire to OWN the the same TESTIMONY, that some of these AUTHORS OWNED and SEALED with their BLOOD.

We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled unto God.— 2 COR. v. 20.

G L A S G O W :

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T O T H E
R E A D E R.

THERE seems to be little or no necessity for treating here of the the Lives and Contendings of the Authors of the following Discourses, these being all, except two*, touched at in the *Scots Biography*, a second Edition of which is now intended.—Neither can it be rationally expected, that I should now insist upon the subject matter, scope or design of these discourses; seeing that I had so lately an opportunity for that purpose in a Publication of this kind; which, I presume, is in the hands of not a few.—All, therefore, that I shall hint of this nature at present, is, just to observe,

1st, THAT

* *VIZ.* Messrs *John Blackadder*; *Gabriel Semple*, of whom take the following hints. Mr. *John Blackadder* was ordained minister at *Traquair*, 1653, was from thence ejected after the Restoration, preached afterward in the fields under many hardships, was declared a rebel 1670,—was apprehended after many remarkable escapes, and brought before the Council, 1687, where he boldly avowed his preaching in the fields and his Master's warrant so to do; and being on the reserve as to the *Torwood* Excommunication he was by them sent to the *Bass*, where he continued prisoner until he entered into his Master's joys about the year 1686.

Mr. *Gabriel Semple* was son to Sir *Bryce Semple* of *Cathcart*, was settled minister at *Kilpatrick* Durham before the Restoration; but was thrust from thence by the *Glasgow* Act, 1664; after which he repaired to the house of *Corsock* where the field preachings first began. He preached to the horsemen when they took the Covenants at *Lanerk* 1666, and was at *Pentland*;—after which he preached in the fields for some time. At last he was apprehended and brought before the Council; he was then liberated; but in a few weeks summoned to appear again; but retired to *England*, where he continued till the Revolution, when he was settled minister at *Jedburgh*, where he continued till his death, *Anno* 1706.

1st, THAT as to the subject matter or scope of these Sermons, they are sound and solid, setting forth the salvation of sinners to be solely of free grace, in and thro' the Mediatory offices the doing and dying of the God-Man Jesus Christ in a most lively and striking manner.— And for a doctrinal testimony none can be more explicit, than some of the Authors of these Sermons are in asserting Christ's headship over the church, the *Jus Divinum* of Presbytery, in opposition to Popery, Prelacy, Sectarianism, and every error and heresy whatsoever, with the duty of both private and public Covenanting, and the binding obligation of these National Vows that our forefathers came under in these lands unto the Most High.— And for practical religion, and closing with Christ in the gospel offer, it is in these discourses pressed and recommended in the warmest manner. And how necessary and requisite are such doctrines as these, in this insidious and lukewarm generation? Wherein there are not only such swarms of Arminian caterpillars, Socinian vipers, and Deistical locusts ascending *out of the bottomless pit*, who daily live by corroding and gnawing at the vitals of religion, and whose constant employment consists in undermining and sapping the foundation of man's salvation; the productions of whom are constantly teeming from both Press and Pulpit,—*whose words do eat as doth a canker*,—*Bringing in damnable heresy, even denying the Lord that bought them*. But even some of these bearing the Presbyterian name, and who would have themselves called orthodox teachers are now planning out to themselves a scheme of sentiments, which, if prosecuted in a consistency with themselves, would not only enervate the sinews, and unhinge the whole system or frame of Presbyterian principles anent church-government, but even, if possible, relieve their implicit followers (who imbibe these pernicious notions) from every sacred tie, bond or obligation: Nay, bear with me if I should say the seal, of the covenant not excepted †: which

† Perhaps some may think, that I am here more liberal in charging than proving. But for Church-communication and public Covenanting see their own writings lately published to the world on that head. And for personal Covenanting, it is also by some denied; nay that there is any thing of the nature of an engagement in Communicating-work, or in requiring the Sacrament of the Supper. There remains therefore only the other seal of the Covenant, Baptism, and that must also fall of course with the other. For

which, in effect, says (whatever flaming pretences to piety and religion they may make) *let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us.*—And for true practical religion, although we may say that we seem to be the generation on whom that part of the ancient prophecy is fulfilled;—*many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased;* yet at the same time, many are lost for want of wholesome doctrine and instruction:—*my people perish for lack of knowledge.* This at first view may appear to be a paradox; and yet alas! it will be found an awful, and a certain truth, that there are many sitting daily under the drop of a frauding ministry, that are ignorant of the very first principles of Christianity. And how many more are utterly strangers to the power and efficacious working of the holy Spirit, to convincing, converting and regenerating grace, which terminate in a godly sorrow for sin, hatred of it, turning from it unto Christ, resting and relying on the promises, uniting the soul unto him for sanctification and holiness, the happy result of that experimental knowledge or inward and spiritual feeling of what we hear and believe concerning him, being invested by the Spirit of the living GOD, putting on the new man,—*which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.*

2dly, As to the character and principles of some of the Authors of the following Sermons, I know it is objected,

1. In Baptism we are engaged (at least our parents for us) to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh; which three in substance comprehend the whole duty we owe to God and one another; and what is personal or public Covenanting either, but a more explicit engagement unto these; and deny this, deny the other also.— And

2. They object, it was our forefathers only that took these Covenants, and what have we to do with them, or what right had they to engage for us? But the same holds good here in Baptism: It is our parents that engage for us; and what right have they in the one more than in the other, when both are commanded duties? Deny the binding obligation of the one the other must of necessity fall to the ground also.

Lastly, It must be equally absurd to say, that these Covenants cannot be of a moral nature, or morally binding, because there are political clauses in them: for can it be denied, that the supporting, upholding, assisting and defending of the lawful magistrate in the exercises of his office, is a commanded duty in scripture; and yet pray, how can these be done except in a political way.

jected, that they were not so staunch in point of judgment, as the more faithful party were: as to this it must be granted, that some of these men, particularly, Mr. *Welch*, did not act such an honest part, especially in the affair of *Bothwel*, as could have been wished or expected: But this seems to proceed from his want of clearness to cast off the king's (I may say the tyrant's) authority in things civil, or rather his not knowing when to put the period betwixt a king and a tyrant, he having been once a lawful Covenanted King. And yet I must say in his behalf, that none of these men whose Sermons are here given to the Public, were ever indulged or yet approved of the indulgence, (if I mistake not). And notwithstanding their want of clearness in this point; yet they were witnesses, and suffered much for the cause of Christ.—And likewise these Sermons were delivered before any compliance they can be charged with existed: and were it here expedient, I could produce a number of instances, shewing that great and good men in the church have thro' an erring judgment have been left to make foul slips of compliance.—And further, it is well known that not long before this, Mr. *Cargil* preached along with Mr. *John Blackadder* †: and it is accounted a gem in Mr. *Cargil's* character, the testimony that Mr. *Blackadder* that day gave of him. And

Lastly, LET it be observed, that on account the *Register* swelled in the Press, above what was expected, there are none of the Lectures, and but a few of the Sermons got here printed that were proposed, or intended at least, to have been Published, could the Volume have admitted of it.

AND as I formerly noticed, as these discourses were only taken down in short-hand from the mouths of the Authors, (and mostly by unlearned men) when delivered, they must be far inferior to what they would have been, had they been written and corrected by the Authors themselves, or even now by some more able hands.—But in this it is hoped that the intelligent, and more indulgent Reader will throw the mantle of charity over

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† The Reader is desired to observe, it was Mr. *William Blackadder* who made the compliance in the affair of *Bothwel*, and not Mr. *John Blackadder* whose Sermons are now published.

any failing or imperfection he shall here meet with, either as to matter or order of method;—and for typographical mistakes, neither the Authors nor Transcriber can otherwise be answerable or accountable.—But not to insist or detain the Reader any longer, may he—*who hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise,—and chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty,* 'The GOD that appeared to Jacob at Luz in the land of Canaan, the Angel of the Covenant, that blessed him at Peniel and Mahanaim, bless these Discourses, and those formerly published, with every other mean of instruction, for his own glory, the advancement of the Mediator's kingdom, and the edification and consolation of his own people, that they may increase and persevere in truth and true holiness, until they are wafted over the brinks of Jordan unto the flowery banks of EMANUEL's land in light and glory:—for if I could perform any part of acceptable service before God, with the apostle, *My earnest desire and prayer is, (at least would be) that Israel may be saved.*

LOCHGOIN, July 28th, 1780.

A

COLLECTION OF SERMONS, &c.

Two SERMONS Preached by MR. JOHN KID,
July —, 1678.

GALATIANS V I.

Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made you free.

[FORENOON'S SERMON.]

SOME of you may perhaps remember what progress we have already made upon these words. We told you, that the apostle had here to do with a number of people, even a company of unfixed and unstable souls and fleeting professors: they were like children tossed too and fro, going hither and thither. Such a practice was unbecoming the gospel and Christian liberty, whereby they were admitted unto and privileged with the New Testament dispensation. And those who lived in ignorance in these times God winked at; but now he calls all men to repent and pray, &c. But it may be, some of you neither pray in private, nor in public, nor in families: and O but it is a shameful thing (not to speak of the sin) to see a man or woman living in Scotland, and not to pray; and yet I believe there are thousands in Scotland that pray none at all.

Now, do you know how soon you will have to appear before God? and what will ye answer when he shall ask, where did ye live when upon earth? 'Lord I lived in Scotland;' in Scotland, that was a praying land. What

time lived ye there? 'I lived there betwixt 1638 and 1649.' Indeed that was a praying time, when the gospel was both powerful and purely preached: and lived ye all that time in the land without being a praying man or woman? Remember, Sirs, that I tell you, that these days are coming upon you, when such an accompt will be sought for at you hand, when the Lord will say unto you, 'how durst ye live without God, *and without Christ in the world?*'—Man or woman, did ye not read the Bible? Perhaps some may say, I cannot read it: but that is no excuse; ye might have heard it read by others. But I'll tell you, that, by the bye, there are some that cannot read the Bible that will pray more spiritually and to better purpose than many that can read it; yea, better than many of the greatest doctors and clergy men amongst us †. Then says the Lord, 'how comes it that ye did not pray? in what case came ye before my bar?' what will your answer be? Ye will then be speechless; for then ye will appear without the wedding garment; and yet will say, *Lord, open unto us*: But he will answer and say, how came ye hither? Ye are not praying men and women: *depart from me; for I know you not: take and bind them hand and foot, and cast them into utter darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

But it may be, ye believe not these things; but whether ye believe them or not, all that ever received breath in Adam, shall stand before the judgment-seat, and there must give an account. It will be a strange company: The Lord will say in that day to believers, where came ye from? Lord, I came from such and such a place in the world; and while I was in it, thou madest me a praying man, or a praying woman, lad or lass, through thy grace? Then he will say, poor things, come in: ye are of them *that have come out of many tribulations, &c.* Ye are welcome: Come and take your rest; for you are mine. O Sirs, if ye knew how acceptable such are un-

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† Here I might observe, that through the paucity of teachers the distance from Seminaries of learning, the negligence of parents, or their straitning circumstances: numbers of the inferior rank in these times were not (as we call it) book-learned; and yet some of these had more real religion by heart, than many of the learned Rabbies of this day have by rote. But as the want of this was matter of grief unto the n, let none be encouraged thereby to a neglect of such a valuable privilege, when they can have it now with small expences (at least common learning) and with no great difficulty.

to the Lord; ye would all become praying folk, if ye knew the worth that is in this word, SAVIOUR. The Holy Ghost has chosen that word of purpose that his people might lay hold upon it; that is, consolation; and to let you see what room ye have in God's heart, (so to speak) that he might quadrate to our necessity and up-taking:—If he had exprest and set forth himself under some great name suitable unto himself, ye could not have taken it up: but he revealed the name suitable unto the office a SAVIOUR, and we know and can take up that: For to them that are guilty sinners, there is a kindly sympathy betwixt sinners (penitent sinners) and a saviour.

Here the apostle draws a conclusion of the former promise; and buckle as ye will, ye stand in need of an admonition; *Stand fast in the liberty, &c.* And there are none but what stand in need of this admonition, *Stand fast.* Honest people, he puts them all in one catalogue: there is none but they stand in need of this admonition; nay, we must admonish ourselves. Will ye stand?—*Stand fast.* That imports fixedness, and not staggering: it is a noble thing, Christians, to be fixed; and when ye have done all, to stand, *Stand fast,* says the apostle, *and quit yourselves like men.* Know ye what profession ye are of? Are ye under the king's colours? And have ye the king's badge? Then ye are under an honourable Master and profession.

If ye will stand, quit yourselves like men; and let the temptation know that ye are not like children tossed to and fro; but that ye are men of great minds to stand and be fixed: and though there were no more to encourage you, this commendation of stedfastness might encourage you.—If there be any thinking folk amongst you, it is those who stand and are stedfast; and what is the reason, that one will thrive as much in one year, as another will do in twenty years? The reason is, the one is fixed, and the other is unstable; the one is stedfast and strict, and the other is lax and not straight in his conversation.—So that if ye would be ripe (or ready) for any good turn, then be stedfast, and stand fast, and pray that ye may be *sanctified, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light and glory.* Seek to see your evils; and you may see as much now as you may ever see again. And as you see yourselves enemies to God by lusts and corruption, strive to have them mortified.

Ye think it a hard task to mortify these lusts and idols that are as dear unto you as your right-hand and right-eye; but you must quit them, although they should seem a thousand times more so. I confess mortification is a hard task; that is, to *go from strength to strength, until every one of them appear in Zion before God.*

But consider the idols that continue latent in your bosom; and when you have found them out, make use of the sacrificing knife to kill and crucify them: It is one of the pleas the Lord has with Scotland, their not mortifying of sin; there is not that mortifying of sin that should be among us: and the reason is, we are at a stand; but we should go forward, forward, and still forward: We should go up and down in his name; and on *in strength of God the Lord.*

Now, that which we last observed from these words, (you may remember) was, That the Christian is the only privileged man and woman in the world. What serves all other things without this? If they had mountains of gold and silver, O Christians, ye have more than them all, since ye can claim that inheritance. O but ye will be a joyful sight unto him, and a joyful sight to yourselves, when ye can claim a right unto all the privileges of true Christians' Ye are privileged men indeed; for ye shall be admitted to *see him as he is*, and to see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: These will be your company in the kingdom of God. It is true, it is not so easy to be a Christian, as some may suppose it to be: But such as are made to stand in this liberty wherein *Christ hath made them free*, when they see it, they will be made to think it was nothing in them that made them so; but will say, it was God that came into my heart, and wrought there, and determined my heart to love and follow him, though I before followed the devil a foot.—But Christ passed by, and said, Sirs, follow him no more, but come *and follow me*. That was a brave word, that he spake to Peter and John: he said nothing more unto them at first but *Follow me*, and they did so. It is always good when folk make no hesitation when he calls them to follow him.

Then, Sirs, remember that the Christian man is a privileged man: he is so here, and shall be so through all eternity: and though he be laid in the grave, he shall not so rot as to be annihilated: he shall rise and live again. Ye may, while here, be in trouble and pain, and

have brought forth *nothing but wind*; but hear what he says, *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust,* &c. Isa. xxvi. 19. Ye shall rise that day, and be made capable to converse and dwell together throughout all eternity.

And here we shall speak unto a few things wherein the Christian is privileged beyond what we have formerly spoken; but perhaps we may not get through these privileges at present.—And it is even to you that we speak, O Christians, that ye may still review your privileges.—Abraham commanded his servant Eleazar to go to the land of his kindred for a wife to his son Isaac; which he did: And when he came to that good woman Rebecca, he said, Wilt thou go to my Master? He is his Father's only son, and he is a good man, and in covenant with God: Wilt thou go with me unto a far country? What answer shall I take back? What say you? Wilt thou go with this man? *And she said, I will go.* The very report of an Isaac engaged her heart to consent to go.—But, Sirs, here is a greater Isaac offered unto you this day: Will ye go unto our Lord Jesus Christ? This day we are sent as Eleazar to tell you, That he is his Father's only son; he is rich; and he wants for nothing: and he is in covenant with you. What shall we answer his Father this day concerning your consent? Will ye go and take him to be your Lord and Husband? or will ye go without him? He is *blessed, and shall be blessed*, and they are a happy and blessed people who accept of him: You may all cast down your caps before this matchless one,—who has all the blessings of the covenant to bestow upon you?—Then come and take him with all his blessings, for all grace is in him, for verily *in him is all grace and glory.* Come away, then, unto this precious and glorious Isaac: young men and young women, will ye fall in love with him? Ye will never sustain any loss by him. It were a thousand pities to let him go, and not accept of him: Come then and espouse him. Will none of you come? Will not some one or other of you come and marry this Isaac? Come and go with him, when your hearts are black and decayed: Then take a view of your privileges: Look unto all the four airts of heaven, and ye shall not find such a lovely one to match with as our Lord Jesus Christ. He is a blessed man that can review all his privileges: Tell you
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and tell you over again, when we have done what we can, we will not get to the far end of them.

I left off last at some directions for improving of your privileges or liberty; and ye that have strength to improve them, improve them; for God has given you a stock. Exercise your faith, and exercise your hope: It is not for yourself only you have got it: It is given you to benefit others; make the country-side the better for it. O trade with it, Sirs, and improve it. We spoke to seven or eight graces that many folk are faulty or deficient in. We shall now speak a word unto these nine or ten more. And

1. *Hast thou faith? have it for thyself.* We will not say, that a parent can save his child; but we say, a faithful praying parent, by prayer and fervent supplication to God, may do a child good. It is true, a godly father may have an ungodly child, (we have seen it so) and an ungodly father may have a godly child; but that which is your duty at present, is, to make your calling and election sure: Pray and pray in faith, and yet know that prayer will not save you: Many good words will not save you, nor do your turn. But

2. You should improve the grace of hope. When Israel had travelled a few days in the wilderness, after they had so lately seen the wonderful works of the Lord, then they had hope enough: But when they got not their beastly appetites satisfied, then they murmured and reflected upon the Lord, and upon his servant Moses. They said, we had better have died in Egypt, when we did eat the onions and the garlick, and were satisfied with the flesh pots, &c. Therefore it was so with the Lord's people, when he began to deal with them: and he deals with their hearts to love him as here, when there was nothing but communion and fellowship with God: he delights in them and they in him: But when a storm arises and flies in their faces, their hope and confidences vanish. The Lord said, he would give them the land as he promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; yet they cried more after their lusts, than after the promised land. It was better, say they, with us when in Egypt, than it is likely to be with us now: when we did eat the onions and garlick, then we had hope.—Sirs, it was so with us in Scotland, when the work of reformation began; then we had armies in the field for the Lord, his work and covenants; but as soon as these were gone away, then we lost all hope; and now we conclude, that all is
lost

lost and gone. The Lord said, I will have Abraham better tried; I will see what hope he hath in me: Go, Abraham, and offer up your only begotten son Isaac: and it is said of him, Rom. iv. 18.—*who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations: he believed in hope.* And I will not say, that this generation will live to see the decayed and ruined work of reformation revived and raised up, and restored unto its former purity and integrity——But this I believe, and ye ought to believe it, that Scotland is a covenanted land. Our land is promised unto Christ, Psa. ii. 8. *I will give the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.*—It is a land married unto the Lord; and therefore he will not forsake it utterly. Bless God; but for what? Bless him daily for what he has done for us, and for what he has done for poor Scotland. Let your hope be improved, and pray more and more, so as your hope be not marred. Christians not improving their hope hinders them from seeing their privileges. Many care not whether Christ stay with, or go from Scotland: they are not troubled about it. But hope is much decayed: There are strong giant-corruptions to hinder you in the war.—God took Scotland by the hand, when it was low, and none cared for us. Do not bring up an evil report of the good land. I hope that God will yet put a new song in our mouths; for all that is come and gone with us.

3. There is the grace of heavenly mindedness: that is now decayed amongst us. There is no more religion seen, at least amongst the most part, either upon the Lord's day or on a week-day, than amongst those that live in the wilds of America. It was not wont to be so: when God began with you, ye carried so, that the tears would have been seen to trickle down your cheeks. In the day of your espousals, reading, preaching, hearing, and conversing, learned from heaven, might have been then read in your conversation: when any went by the way, it was refreshing to hear that method.—There was nothing heard but what was for edification. Then were opportunities taken for prayer, and what was spoken was for God. But now this is in a great measure laid by. We speak now of our own worldly things: we think our own thoughts; and since it is so, what wonder is it, that the Lord repent and disclaim us? We walk not with God, nor are right in heart with him:—our carnal language says, that the Lord is *not in all our thoughts.*—Are

we then a thriving land or people? Alas, may it not be seen that our practices differ little from the practices of profane wicked men on his holy day?—His day is not improved; and no wonder ye see not your privileges.—Are ye looking within the suburbs of heaven? Are ye reading and praying, and your hearts therein? O what a desirable thing is it to have your hearts in heaven, to be heavenly as God is so, to see him face to face; and to *see him as he is*. Remember that a holy God is taking notice of you; and therefore speak so, and hear so, and resolve to walk more holy, and say, This shall be my work in time to come.—Up-sitten Christians, are ye not ashamed that a poor lads or lad (as we commonly call them) have made more progress, and profited more in Christianity in one year, than ye have done in twenty, nay, than some of you in thirty years? Oh, oh, that it should be so, and not laid to heart by you. And

4. There is the grace of humility, that is not made progress in by us. We all mind our own things, Baruch-like: he was a man afflicted for his own things; and Jeremiah reproves him for it.—*Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not*. It was not a fit time to seek after these things.—Nay, it is a more fit time to endeavour after abasement and humility; for it will suit and become the time much better. The man that is humble and abaseth himself unto the dust, is the man that the Lord delights to dwell with: he *will dwell with the humble and contrite in heart*; the man that is taken up with God and heaven. God's cause and worship when encroached upon, go nearest his heart; for it is suitable that the people of God lie low, when the house of God and the city of our father's sepulchres lies waste. If the desolate waste thereof were lying near our hearts, as it ought, it would sweep away all our own things, that they would not come so much to our remembrance; and then we would be crying unto the Lord, when we see breach upon breach. If Scotland were rightly improving the dispensation that it is under at this day, we would be praying more and crying more that the Lord would root up and cast out every plant that *his own right-hand has not planted*.—We are in a sad case, and you may say how can we be but grieved when our brethren and acquaintances are led into captivity before the enemy? We do not improve the matters of God as we ought: for if we did so, it would go better with our own matters,

ters, even the matters betwixt God and us : Yea the consideration of this, rightly laid to heart, would make us all weep and humble ourselves, that the glory of God in Scotland is like to be ruined, burnt up and sold unto captivity, as it is at this day.—Do these things lie near your heart ? When did you mind the violence done unto her, *viz.* the church of Christ in Scotland, as you ought ? If you were right in heart, these things would otherwise affect you, and lie more near your hearts than oftentimes they do. But

5. There is sincerity ; and we are guilty and faulty if we do not improve this our sincerity. Shall we say, that many of you have been but hypocrites ? Indeed we fear many of you have been so ; but we exhort you to be sincere. The apostle Paul unto the Philippians does so :—*That ye may be sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ, Phil. i. 10.* A great man in our land, (he was a man amongst a thousand) said, he had been studying sincerity for many years, and yet he acknowledged he knew not what it was †. He must be a sincere man that is rightly improving his privileges ; but if we were sensible of our not improving them, it were so far good : but what can we expect from God, while we improve them not ? Try and search your own selves, and be not reprobate. But Christian sincerity lies here, to improve your privileges. Ye should, in order to this, be acquainted with God and lie more near him, and be more knowing in his matters, and every moment be ready to appear in God's matters ; and he will be found a dissembler that does not so : That soul that abides near God, will ever be judging itself ; it will ever be laying hold upon God by faith. God will lie near unto him : he will be lying all night between his breasts ; Each moment he will admit of no beloved but Jesus Christ : wife, children, land, rents, &c. will be nothing in comparison of him : All these will not satisfy, if I want him, (says the spouse) *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth ?—He is mine, and I am his : he feedeth amongst the lillies.*—O Sirs, lie near him, that the power of his death and virtue of his resurrection may come, and enable you to improve your privileges. Let sin, every lust and abomination

† According to the manuscript, this was one of the Messrs. Guthrie's : probably, it was Mr. William Guthrie sometime minister at Finvick.

that makes you unlike him be mortified and killed : Seek to get them all thrust to the door, and to have sin slain, that ye may live, die, and rise again, as he did. A soul that is so, nothing will satisfy, but more of God's ordinances; prayer and preaching will be empty, if Christ be not there, and it see *his outgoings as the morning*. Ye should cry out, Oh to be like him. It is these that are in nearest fellowship with him, that enjoy their privileges, and have ordinances green and favoury : There is nothing that will please such a soul but that.—
But

6. There is stability : people are not improving stability. Now, Sirs, what are ye to stand for? and what is become of us all in this respect? where is that going on *in the strength of God the Lord*? Folk are now given to flinch in many things. The stedfast man that stands or keeps his ground, the more trials and difficulties he meets with, he grows the more ; they put him not one step back ; but over them he prevails ; and so he improves his stedfastness.—Therefore stand fast : mark your ground before, or else a trial or temptation will soon cast you upon your backs ; it did so with David, and Peter. Then improve your stedfastness ; and the more, because many are going off both into right and left-hand extremes. O therefore improve stability, that ye turn not from the right way of the Lord. But

7. There is singularity ; and we do not improve that. We ought to be very singular, if we would walk as true practical Christians. If we would be justified and sanctified, we must be singular ; not men self-conceited of vain glory ; we must be men improving our mercies ; we must be men of singular resolution like David or Joshua, who said, Josh. xxiv. 13. *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*.—Although the rest should go on in an evil and bad course, serving their own lusts and the world ; yet (says he) *I and my family have resolved to serve the Lord*. One poor man or woman will prove stable in their resolutions, when another turns aside : many in Joshua's days went wrong, when he kept the right way. Then study more singularity in this ; for the times call for it, even these times wherein our lot is fallen. Noah walked with God, and it is said, *That he was a perfect man in his generation*, i. e. he walked according to the rule ; and he was a preacher of righteousness ;

ness, he exhorted them all to repentance; but did they do it? no, they did not,—Enoch walked with God: and it is said, *He was not, because God took him.*—There are thousands in Scotland this day, that walk not with God; and yet there is a great reward provided for them that walk with him, go where they will.—So he will be a singular man, and a praying man, and has a happy issue; and this I declare unto you.

8. The grace of self-examination is not in exercise in this our day. Then try yourselves: we have taken an easy way now: we are not found in the exercises of this duty: men and women have left that; and it is now many years since it was rightly practised; that is to say, that we were going out from Egypt; but alas! we are returning back unto it again. So you must examine your state; and see, whether ye are in the faith or not? whether ye be following hard after God or not? he is, as it were hovering over you: therefore study to be praying folk: try whether ye be in a thriving condition, following the Lord, and advancing in Christianity. See if ye be mortifying sin and corruption. Lay yourselves in God's balance. Deal impartially as before God. Indeed the grace of self-examination is become very rare in these days: but O Sirs, believe in Christ, and weigh yourselves, and see what weight of mettle ye have, and what ye are of: see whether ye be of good or bad mettle. We exhort you to weigh yourselves before God.—Many amongst you have complied with these that hate God; yea, they hate God and Christ both; and even when his back is at the wall, (so to speak). Therefore examine into that, and see your sin in so doing, and be humbled for it; for the stress of your business lies in avowing of God. We are concerned to own him, and to own the government of his house, and to own his covenants that ye and the land did swear.—Examine your own particular engagements; that ye have come under at communion-days, or fast-days. Weigh these things, I say, and see how answerably ye have walked unto them; or else the Lord will weigh them and you both; or rather you for the abusing of them.—There are many may have the root of the matter in them, and yet things not be right between God and them: but the exercise of grace will keep things right; but the habit of grace will not keep you right, if ye be not assisted by the exercises thereof. But

9. There

9. There is another thing that we shall name, and that is, self-denial: it is also in decay amongst us; and we cannot well tell what say to that. But it was a lesson taught by Jesus Christ himself, Mark viii. 34. *Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* In what do ye deny yourselves? What are ye doing in Scotland? Do we avow Christ? Nay, the rulers in Scotland deny Christ in this: it is a requisite duty for Christians to avow Christ at all times, and especially at this time. You must resolve to stand and fall with his interest. Study to be loosed from all things that ye are so knit to in this world. Whatever ye are gropping after, keep a loose gripe of it: He that will not deny himself for Christ, cannot be his disciple. Ye must bear with the loss of all. What if God call for a testimony from you, if it be to suffer the loss of goods, gear, imprisonment, banishment unto a strange land: yea, if it be to death itself on a scaffold, resolve in his strength to give obedience, and say, What have I here? there is nothing but toil, trouble and travel: say, my hope is in heaven. Have ye your hope there? improve this grace, and see if ye have a heart to sell all things, and to *buy this pearl of great price*: It is a most rational resolution: if you would be wise merchants, buy that; sell all, and buy it: The want of resolution to buy this pearl of great price, makes you undetermined in your duty. Ye are under engagements: study to acquit yourselves: forego and quit all; and keep your engagements: resign all away but Christ, and keep a strong gripe of him; and keep a loose gripe of all other enjoyments, whether it be land, rents, wife or children: keep a loose gripe of them.—We exhort you not to mind these things too much;—for if we were Christians indeed, we would be living in heaven, while here upon earth.—Now, Sirs, then let self-denial be made conscience of: Let it be in a dependency on God; which is the

10. And last grace (we shall mention) that we come short of, *viz.* dependence on God. Let your souls depend

¶ Here observe, that the Lord did enable this his witness, not only to practise and perform what he himself heretaugh, but also to seal the same with his blood; which he did upon the 14th of August next year at the cross of Edinburgh before many witnesses: *But them that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.*

pend on God. Where is the soul that is trusting and depending on him? The Spirit of God says, *Though the mountains were removed, and cast into the midst of the sea, &c. And though the fig-tree should not blossom,* says the church, *yet truly we will trust in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation,—who rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth.* Know ye that all our rulers are set against God the Lord? Yet rejoice, because God reigns: let your souls have dependence on him. Of all the reasons why the Christians in Scotland are so far from God, this is one of the chief; they have no trust in or dependence on him. Who amongst us has any trust in or dependence on him as we ought to have?

Now (for a conclusion) what say ye to this? Will ye wait, and wait on? Do ye believe, that God has power, *and that the God of Jacob will be your refuge?* Are ye at that with David, Pſal. iv. 8. *I will both lay me down and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety?* And that ye will not care *what man can do unto you: why?* Because ye have dependence on him: This is that which makes Christians rejoice, although they should be dispersed through many nations, that he has promised to be a little sanctuary unto them.—Say, that God and you shall never part: and be where you will, he shall be your sanctuary that will abide wind and weather.—Dependence on God will make the Christian suffer the loss of all things. O say, *The Lord is on my side, I shall not be moved.—He is my strength and my saving health,—my rock and strong tower;* and I trust in him, and therefore I shall stand fast, and not fall.

Now he that can truly say this, is a blessed and a happy man: dependence on God will make folk take *joyfully the spoiling of their goods;* and the reason is, because that man has his treasure and privileges in heaven:—he has the Bible here, wherein is contained that covenant of free grace; and on that he depends. So depend on God, that he may clear up your sky a little: depend on God with your souls, and that will make you improve dispensations: fix on God: take him as he has offered himself in the promises of the gospel.—And to him be the praise. AMEN.

S E R M O N II.

GALATIANS V. 1.

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith
Christ hath made us free.—*

[The second SERMON on this Text.]

I WAS telling you that Christians were a privileged people, beyond any other in the world. If ye be true Christians, ye may look up and down through your privileges, as they are to be found in the scriptures: I say, ye may turn over the whole Bible, and yet not come to take up all your privileges: and well may ye enjoy your privileges, and much joy may ye have in them:—for none will take them from you. Therefore think much good of them, and of him who gave you them,—It was neither father nor mother that gave them unto you: it was Christ that made you free; and that is the person, I hope, that ye will think much good of,—and ye have good reason for it, and I hope ye will have much honesty (or credit) of it, and much good of him, when all the rest of the world will be made to stand at his left-hand trembling. We bid you neither say, speak nor think against them; beware of that.

Christ your portion is up yonder; look up to him, while sojourning here. When trials come upon you, then look up unto him.—Yea, I assure you, man cannot tell you what he is: Christians cannot tell you; nay, all the world cannot tell you rightly what he is: heaven and earth cannot tell you what he is; and you may tell them, I cannot tell them:—for I cannot tell where a Christian's privilege lies if Christ be out of it; what worth is in it?—Alas! if ye knew rightly what religion were,
and

and if ye were more in it! O mind, mind this, Sirs; and look over yonder tribulations: what is the matter, if ye become his? and what is the matter what ye be, if heaven become yours? All your losses shall be then made up unto you. O Christians, ye that have grace sing praise:—he hath made you a privileged people. Exalt him, and be ashamed, if ye will not do it.—Are ye ashamed of him? Then go your way, ye have nothing to do with him here. The day is coming, blessed be God, that ye shall not be ashamed for his sake. The day is coming, that ye may say, I shall count to a thousand degrees of kindred, for I shall be a near kinsman to him. O then lay claim to him: I exhort you in the sight of God, (and all that is looking through these elements) that ye make use of Christ and this salvation. What say ye to this? Are ye saying, wells us, that ever we had the offer of this salvation; that ever princely Jesus came in your way, and that the day may be hastened, when he and you shall finally meet together.

Now, soon may he come, and well may he come: say, *Come, Lord Jesus*, to thy house again in Scotland; Pray, pray that Christ may come again to the palaces in Scotland. It is a wonder to me, that some are in their right-minds, and not breaking their very hearts for his return. What do ye say? Tell him from me, my heart is with him. My soul is with him: my heart goes out after him; and I am sick of love.—Be ashamed, all ye professors in Scotland; we are all affronted for evermore. O Sirs, we have sinned away Christ from amongst us in all the parishes round about. And how many broken hearts are there amongst us all for him? And wherefore serves preaching or ordinances, if Christ be not in them? Preaching is not worth the wagg of one's finger, if he be not there:—Now, what think ye of him? I doubt not but believers will think much good of him: all the world cannot express the thoughts that they have of him. O if we saw but one blink of his face, we would be made to wonder at him. But I fear we lose him while amongst our hands: we do not hold or gripe to him; nay there are many of you that care not for him in receiving of him: ye walk only by rule of thumb, (as we use to say): if ye get him, ye will take him; and if ye get him not, ye can deliberately want him.

But prize him, ye that are privileged Christians. If ye do not, come not again here the next day. And tho'

all should lie by, see that ye who are privileged people, lie not by. He shall have a generation yet in Scotland that shall praise him; when he returns back, hands, heart, and feet and all shall set forth his praise. Now for the time, where are your hearts? are they going out after him? what think ye of him? I cannot tell you; but if ye serve and exalt him, it shall not be for nought: so study to be in him. And ye that are privileged folk, bless him every day; and ye are faulty, if ye do it not: what ye have here is but the earnest of what ye are to receive hereafter: your great things are reserved to be given you at the great day. If ye knew it, ye would long after him.

Many a brave day are ye to have there. There will be no preaching in heaven, no ordinances there: Christ Jesus is the light there unto all that fair company and household. Will it not be a fair family, when all the *general assembly of the first born* shall be conveyed and met yonder in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air? There shall not be one a-wanting; but there shall be a perfect number in that day with the Father and the Son, when they shall all meet up in the higher house with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Ye are great folk; ye are Christians; but many shall fall away betwixt this and that day. Therefore guard well, whilst you are here; and God will help you to it.—If we had our salvation a-guiding, but God be thanked, it is in a surer hand than ours: our help is laid upon one who is mighty, and can guide well, *i. e.* upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the captain of our salvation. There is many a poor man and woman up yonder, that he hath guided thither. Therefore, we exhort you and press you, in this king's name, to begin now and bless him in the midst of all your troubles. Bless, bless him that ever the captain of our salvation *was made perfect through suffering*.

Now, there will be a fair company of you there, that neither gout, gravel, nor any other disease will seize upon through all the ages of eternity. Ah! ah! think on your privileges; and much good may ye have of them: but if ye slight your mercy now, it is a hundred to one, if ever ye repent, and if ever ye shall have these offers again, if ye slight them now.—I tell you that angels are now taking notice what entertainment ye are giving him; men and women, lads and lassies, are ye receiving, or will ye enter into a covenant with him never

to be forgotten?—Now, men and women, what say ye to the offer? Say ye, we will not accept of him? then I am afraid, that it be said by him, ye shall have no more of it from me. But if ye will accept of him, then come and delay not.—There have been much of this language in Scotland: he had staid long from it, if he had not loved it better than ever we have loved him. While he hath respect to us, improve it; and O improve it now; and when ye find him, part not with him again; but follow him whithersoever he goeth: Follow him in all terms and upon all hazards: and do not quit him or turn your backs upon him. *Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.*

Now at this time, we shall only speak a few things by way of direction unto those who never knew Christ.—And, in the name of the Lord, I charge and command all to embrace him.—And there are these five things to prove, how much he is in earnest with you in this matter: and our desire is, that you and he may now meet and go home together; and if ye get a meeting with him, you may go home joyfully, and sing praise unto him in your smoking cottages.

Now we say unto you, both you that know him, and you that know him not; We beseech and obtest you in the name of the Lord, that ye renew and make a sure bargain with him; for he will give you good entertainment this afternoon, and it is hard to say, if ever ye find him upon such terms again. And

1st, The ground that he gives you to receive and accept of him, is this: He is come to bewail and lament over you. If scripture had not express this, we durst not have said it. He is wailing over us, having gathered us afar off and near hand.—*How often would I have gathered thy children together, &c.* So assure yourselves, if ye slight him now, it will be dear-bought unto you: if ye slight him, he will complain of you as he justly did, Isa. v. 14. *What could have been done more to my vineyard, than I have done in it, &c.* And I tell you he hath given you the great things of his law: he hath had his delight with you in Christ before the mountains were laid.—What could Christ have done more amongst you and for you, that he hath not done? He hath been in earnest with you, and wailing over you.—Sirs, he hath given you preaching in abundance, communion-days, fast-days, and thanksgiving days:—He hath been saying to-day,

What could I have done more to the inhabitants of Clydfdale, and of Clyde-side †, and the inhabitants of Glasgow? I have been looking for grapes, but *ye have brought forth wild grapes*: When I looked for a praying people, I have not got it. We command you to take this charge, in the name of the Lord, that when the Lord Jesus Christ is weeping over us, it well befits us to wail over ourselves, that we have given him such a bad requital. Will ye bewail yourselves? for he will take notice of every poor man or woman amongst you, if ye set unto this duty. I tell you, Christ our Lord is in good earnest: come and embrace your privileges: come and make them your own.—Is there not one person in all this great company, that will pity this tender hearted Lord and Saviour? it will be a sad business and a fore matter, if he be obliged to return to heaven, and complain to the Father in this manner: I have been wailing over yonder great company, and there is not a man nor woman, lad nor lass, not one of many hundreds, that will accept of, or that cares for me. O Sirs, if this be so, it will draw deep: The consideration of it should have much weight with you. But

2dly, As Christ is wailing over you, in order to embrace you, so he is (as it were) weeping over you to accept of him. The poor Jews when they saw him weeping over Lazarus's grave, took notice of it, and said, *behold how he loved him*. Will ye also take notice, lay it to heart. We would have you this day considering how matters go in Scotland, and what Christ is doing with us. We think he is doing similar to that Luk. xix. 41. When he was come near he beheld the city (*viz* Jerusalem) and *wept over it* &c. It may be, Christ is passing over Scotland, and weeping over it; he is giving you fast-days; these are visits: do not therefore grieve his tender heart by rejecting him. What? are ye a stupid people under immediate wrath and great hazard? we exhort you again and again, grieve not Christ's tender heart; for perhaps it will lie upon you, when ye cannot help it: his heart is tender, (as it were) melting over you. He said to Jerusalem, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, as a hen doth her brood under her wings, and ye would not*. So Christ says to

† It would appear that these Sermons were preached near the River Clyde.

to Scotland, O Scotland, Scotland, how often would I have gathered thee!—and ye would not. What mean his exhortations, and his invitations? the report of them says this: Is it thus, that Christ would be far in amongst you in Scotland, and you care not for him? O if you would not grieve his heart, (we wot not how to word it) but we say this: that there was never a poor pitiful tender hearted mother more indulgent to a tender and beloved child, then Christ has been to us. Well then, will ye come to him and accept of him? I can assure you, he will make you welcome; and if ye will not receive him, I further assure you, that this offer shall stand on record against you, as long as sun and moon endure. Therefore, as ye would not then be guilty of your own blood, I must yet use the expression do not break, (or grieve) Christ's tender heart: and I again charge you, in his name, to embrace him; for it will not go well over with you, when he shall tell you at last, I took much pains upon you; but ye refused and rejected me.

3dly, We shall give you this inducement to embrace him: and we would fain hope that some of you will do it: be not refractory, but do it, Sirs:—for Christ hath waited many days and years upon your accepting of him, and is yet waiting upon you. What have ye to return in answer to his call? or what say ye unto us who are sent to call you in his name? what? say ye, he hath been waiting to be gracious: he hath been, (as it were,) looking down from heaven, day by day: he hath waited upon you from duty to duty: he might have sent you to condemnation, ere ever ye saw the Bible.—I tell you God is giving you to day a glorious offer: and he is waiting what answer ye will give. Are ye content to take him? and if not, what fault find ye in him? we bid you take him and all advantages with him: let it not be said that he hath opened his shop and yet sold no wares:—for have ye been idolaters,—swearers,—sabbath-breakers,—drunkards,—mockers of God, and his work, &c. if ye will now give up your names, he will accept of you for all the wrongs ye have done to him: indeed it does not become him to wait on such as you; but the scripture says, that he waits to be gracious. He hath let down (as it were) a rope from heaven, that ye may by faith gripe unto it: he is giving you a new invitation to day: and if ye would accept of it, Christ and all his angels in heaven would rejoice; this would be a marriage day:

day: If we could buckle a certain number of you to Jesus Christ, he would go unto the Father and say, yonder is a number of poor things that have accepted of me in the offer of the gospel: and the angels in heaven would rejoice at your accepting of him: and can ye think or find in your heart to put him away? dare ye do it? if ye do, we take heaven and earth, yea and that firmament above you to witness against you; if ye do it not, it will be the dearest refusal ye ever heard of in your life.

4thly, To induce you farther to accept of him, he here offers himself; yea unto the most ignorant amongst you this day, he is (as it were) looking through a narrow calicement in heaven to see and hear what you are doing and saying this day: are you saying, I will take him? and I will have no other beloved than him: do it, and ye will have a sweet look from him; such a look as he gave poor Peter. A little godless girl made him swear, that he knew not his Lord and Master.—Yet his tender hearted Master had more good will to him, than to forsake him utterly for all that. If ye will accept of him, go where he will, he will be for you, and he will look to you; and his look will be like a two edged sword; it will cut and pierce you wherever it comes: there will be no resisting of this: he can make one of his words go thro' you as it did Peter: his look like a sword will cut between the joints and the marrow. When he looked to Peter, it made Peter weep, and that bitterly, (and I suppose) that denying of his Master made him weep while he was in this world: and had he not reason? when he had denied his precious Lord and Master. Some of you have turned your back upon and denied your Master Christ; have ye not got such a look of him? if that have brought you to repentance, then ye have got a blessed look, and will be ashamed of your ways, and say, Oh! that ever I should have denied such a Master.—He hath got the wrong by you, and yet he makes the mends to it: Peter found it so; he proved a coward in the day of adversity: but after that, he never did such a turn again: he boldly avowed him before councils, judicatories, and great men: he still minded, that a poor girl caused him to deny him who was a kind Master: he thus still minded what he did long since: when he was before their rulers and elders, Acts iv. he spake boldly and avowed his Master, and would not be dissuaded from preaching the gospel,

gospel, as if he had said, I remember that I once denied my Master with oaths; but I shall not do this again; I shall avow him, and I shall preach him, while I live: *Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard.*—I will, says he, give him a good word, and speak much to the commendation of his name.—And this may yet come to your door, to give a testimony to his name: see that ye speak much then to his commendation †. Do not deny him: he may come and take goods and land from you, and do not deny him these, as some of you have already done: if ye have done it, do it no more: Let our Lord's cause and glory in his kingly office and his laws be executed; let it be avowed; let a testimony be given for it: he is King in his own house, and shall be so, who will or who will not: Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill in Zion.—And thanks be to God that we had fathers and progenitors before us, who by prayer and supplication, transmitted unto us the pure ordinances of the gospel which we enjoy. And thus did they pray, and were privileged from God with these, and we have them: but what have we done for our posterity? what can we do for them? although we cannot do any thing for ourselves, yet will we do something for the following generations. There are means now used by the powers of the land for robbing us of the gospel of Christ. They sent a godless host of savages amongst you, to banish Christ from amongst us; but we hope when they came and went, ye have lost nothing ‡: Venture yet for Christ; keep the word of his patience, and he shall keep you in the hour of temptation. Keep the word of his testimony: your courage in that went through heaven and earth; when such and such a family was plundered, hardly put to it, and spoiled by those who did what lay in them to ruin you. Well, says the Lord, I have seen their patience, and am well con-

† This came to be the case with several of these who probably were in this apostory, a few years after this.—Neither were his exhortations in vain, when we find such encouragements given to the commendation of Christ, his headship, sovereign grace, and free mercy; in their last speeches and dying testimonies.

‡ Here he seems to mean the Highland host or militia, who in the beginning of this year were poured in upon the Westing-shires of Scotland.

content with their patience and moderation: *I have seen, I have seen their affliction.* I will bless what remains behind: their children shall not miss what is taken away: it was their superfluities: I gave them it, I will give them more. I will bless their children, and I will bless their offspring. Come away then, Sirs, and serve this Lord: strike a bargain with him. Serve him; for he is a goodly Lord and Master: he is waiting on you; although it sets you better to wait upon him. What do ye say, all around this company? are ye content to take him, dead or living? one look of his blessed face will be worth all that ye can suffer for him? Are ye content to close with him, young and old? then come and say, it is a bargain: "I give him my hand and my heart; and I take heaven and earth to witness, that I close now with him, and him alone for my Lord and Saviour." Now I will warrant you, Sirs, Christ and all his blessed company in the higher house are now beholding what ye are doing: and he will say, Father, see yonder poor things are accepting of me in the offers of the gospel: *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me, where I am, &c.* We tell you ye would all be Christians, if ye knew what privileges follow them, and come to them. What art thou, says Christ? Why I am the Christian whom thou gainedst by thy gospel. Says Christ, What wilt thou then do for me? Why, I will through thy grace suffer the worst of hardships. Now such as say so, or would desire to say so, he would gladly be at it with them, (so to say). He is going through Scotland, he is walking among the seven golden candlesticks, to see who will accept of him; and well may he go, and much speed may he come,—Say, Lord, ride through the nations upon thy white horse; ride conquering and to conquer; prospering and to prosper; from Egypt to the river, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.—He hath sent you too many faithful Eliazers, to court or invite you to him, and to commend him unto you:—may I ask who is he that walks in the field yonder? It is your godly Isaac, and match with him: He is his fathers only Son: he will put him in the covenant; and that is better then gold or all worldly treasure: he is more precious than all the kings of the earth; yea he is *the heir of all things.* You know, Isaac was gone forth to meditate in the evening: and this, by the bye, may reprove many folk that match with the ungodly: the god-

godly should match with the godly. Isaac was a godly man; Rebecca a godly modest woman: She covered her face with a veil for modesty; but it is not so with many of the great women in our land; most of them have lost all modesty, they have laid bye their veils, except when their pride or vain glory put them to it. Now we exhort you at least to accept of him: he is going about to engage you, and if ye do not, perhaps ye shall never all get such an offer again. He is calling for a peremptory answer from you this day. What, do ye say we shall advise, and give an answer the next day? No, no, accept of him without delay. Tell not Christ that tale: go no farther: resolve upon it: Christ is walking now amongst the seven golden candlesticks: it says, that Christ would be about with you, (allow me to use the expression). Give up with all and take him: Quit relations, and say thou must be my God, and I must covenant with thee. But

5thly, (or Lastly), To prove that Christ is in earnest with us; he is wearied out with the offering of himself so often and so long as he hath done unto us: he hath been inviting you to take him as in that lxxv. and 2. of Isaiah, *I have spread forth my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, &c.* When he is stretching forth his hands, men and women, will ye come and accept of him? Take him and make him your own; I say, if ye will do it, he will give you a warm reception: he will make you welcome: he will meet you, like young babes that never knew any thing of him all their life: will ye then come and say, I will be for him, and not for another: I will be for thee, and take thee, and all that follows thee. Now if ye say so, it shall be a bargain, and it shall not fail. So do not weary our Lord's patience to wait upon you any longer; and if ye refuse, ye shall repent it.—Remember, that the Lord Jesus Christ is (as it were) hovering over you;—he is wailing over you;—he is weeping over you; he is stretching out his hands to accept of you;—say then, I will be thine; I will go with thee: it is a meeting: Lord, I will make a bargain. And the good Lord bless the bargain.—And to his name be the praise.

N. B. Should any think the two foregoing discourses not so methodical, as what some Sermons are; yet they are, in their matter, both pressing and practi-

practical; and must be rather looked upon as an application unto what he had formerly delivered from this text, than any new doctrinal branch of the subject.—There is also before me in manuscript, a pretty large Sermon (or rather a Lecture) of Mr. Kid's upon Mark viii. 27,——38. And a short Sermon from these words, 1 Sam. iv. 21. *And she named the child I-chabod, saying, the glory is departed from Israel, &c.* which for want of room, could not be here got published. This last discourse was preached in East-Monkland, Sept. 23d, 1678.

P R E F A C E A N D S E R M O N,

Preached by MR. JOHN KING upon a FAST-DAY, in the Parish of KILMARONOCK, *August 22d, 1678.*

P R E F A C E.

BELOVED Friends, here is a great wonder, that ever such an unfuitable generation should have so many precious outlettings of the Lord towards them. This is indeed a wonder: and yet when we consider the love, free grace and goodness of God, that he bestows where and upon whom he will, and that it is not for any worth in us that he confers such offers of himself upon us; we may acknowledge it again to be no wonder, that
whom

whom he will, he loves and saves, and whom he will, he passes by and hardens. And if we consider what we are in ourselves, we may wonder that ever he should have conferred any of his goodness upon us in these corners of the country, as he has done.

Now you must know, Sirs, that this is a day of humiliation; a day of mourning; and we cannot tell, Sirs, who has the greatest cause of mourning. Though the whole country round about should sorrow and cloath themselves with sackcloth; the parishes about Dumbar-ton, Leven and Kilmaronock, particularly, have need to be humbled, considering what great wickedness has been done amongst them against the Lord.—The Lord is calling in those outcasts; and if ye come in this day, and be from henceforth reconciled to God, and say as it is in Psalm cvi. 6. *We have sinned with our fathers: we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedly.* If ye will come and give him your hand and say, that ye will never do as ye have done, what might be promised unto your hands?—Now, these causes of humiliation are so obvious and so many, that we cannot number them: and there are many public sins that we should mourn for this day; the sin of the land and the nation;—national sins that abounds this day.—And then there are personal sins; sins of professors, namely, those that have had a name for a considerable time. I shall only hint at these few things following.

1st, The little esteem that the hearers of the gospel have had of the precious gospel-offers of Jesus Christ. This is a thing evident and manifest. And

2^{dly}, The little success it has amongst us at this time; may not that be matter of sorrow and humiliation, and a reason to ly low in the dust and ashes, and to prostrate ourselves before the Lord and in his sight, that he has offered himself in the gospel, and we have thought nothing of it?—and that we have never studied to have it promoted and advanced in the place where we have lived? How little have ye hereabout sought after the gospel? and how little matter of mourning is it unto you, that ye have done so little to promote the work of God and interest of the gospel amongst you? And

3^{dly}, The dreadful wickedness and impiety that now abounds amongst all ranks: May not that be matter of sorrow amongst us this day?—such as, blasphemy, lying, swearing, perjury, drunkenness, uncleanness, ban-

ning, and other crimes which might be reckoned up, which may be grounds of our humiliation. As few places in the land are innocent in these things, we trow, the places here about are as guilty as any, all sorts of impieties being done amongst you.

4thly, There is the dreadful enmity that is had at the gospel, and the servants of Christ and his people: and ought not this to be matter of deep humiliation? O the enmity they have: they declare it as the sun that shines: if they could have their will, what would they do against his church, servants and people? and this must this day be matter of grief and mourning. And

5thly, There is the breach and violation of the covenants; which must be matter of mourning, sorrow and sad lamentation. Sirs, we know not how many things are wrought now in opposition to the work of God; there is ground of humiliation from all these,—And then

6thly, The dreadful formality of many, who are sitting down and lying by satisfied with, and resting upon what they have attained, neglecting the inside of the duty, careful only about the external part; neglecting practical holiness that sometime they professed to be in practice of. O but this is sad, that folk cannot be reclaimed; we stick close to the sins we should confess: We cannot say but we have been sinners, and some of us loose and profane; but do we refrain from these? Do we refrain from banning, swearing, and other gross immoralities, and neglect of duty? You acknowledge you have done so and so; but grow no better; acknowledge this to be a sin, and that to be a sin, and that we have done all this to the provoking of God; but nothing done for our amendment of life. And is not this ground of mourning this day? But we fear our fasts are not acceptable unto the Lord: Will you call this an acceptable day to the Lord? And

Lastly, There is incorrigibleness against all the strokes of God; against all we met with of old or of late: We never mind it; but go on obstinately. O sad! there is no fruit for all the pains he has taken upon us.—We would intreat you, in this your day, when ye appear to fast and to humble yourselves before the Lord, to acknowledge your own sins, and the sins of the land, and the sins of all ranks therein, sins of kings, princes, nobles, council and colleges of justice,—ministers faults, and
people's

people's faults ; we intreat you, Sirs, to look that ye deal not falsly with him : See that ye mock not God this day : better you had sitten at home, or that such a day had not been appointed in such a place, than have such a matter as a mock fast.—You say, you come to afflict your souls ; But I fear, there be very little affliction of souls for all that, amongst you. If there be any thing of it, let it be seen afterwards : it is not in this day that ye can do all, or that we can seek it ; but from this day begin with it, and let it be seen afterwards.—But not to insist, let us turn to the Lord, and seek a blessing from him to begin with. *So let us pray.*

S E R M O N III.

H A B A K K U K iii. 2.

—*O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years ; in the midst of the years make known ; in wrath remember mercy.*

THIS prophecy, as you will see by reading it, contains a most special exercise of a believer, either in reference to judgments threatened, or judgments inflicted : I say, it contains a most lively exercise, especially in troublous times of the church. It was indeed a troublous time in the church ; and you see the exercise he is now engaged in : why, this prophecy holds it out, and it is set forth by way of dialogue between the Lord and his servant. The prophet, as you will see by reading the whole prophecy, in chap. i. had been sadly complaining of the iniquities of the times, of these sad things that were sinful amongst the people of the Jews ; and he gets an answer which holds out a sad denunciation of anger and wrath against Israel and the Jews for the sins they had perpetrated and committed against him.—And we have the prophet endeavouring to intercede, notwithstanding

standing all the denunciation of wrath, and of the Chaldeans coming against them: and in chap. ii. he gets an answer in which he exhorts the prophet to bid them wait. It is true, that they deserved wrath, and that they should be broken, and that he should execute the fierceness of his wrath upon them: Yet, says he, let them wait on, and I will have a care of my people; if they will confess and take with their faults, then I will take care of them. And in this chapter, ye have the answer: and here is his prayer; he falls upon a prayer for fear of the sad things threatened.

The inscription of the chapter ver. 1. The chapter is divided,

1. His prayer to God in order to comfort his church in her troubles, ver. 1, 2.

2. Ye have the confidence he had in God as to the amendment of the church: And

3. The confidence he had that there would be an outgate and relief to all his servants, from ver. 17. to the end of the chapter. Says he, *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines, the labour of the olives shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls;—yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*—So you see, what height of confidence he attained by the Lord's manifesting of himself; and promising to give them an outgate from that wicked crew that had so oppressed and borne them down.

1st, In the verse read, we have shortly an introduction to this prayer, and the prayer itself: and there is the object for which he prays to God, which is the Lord's work; *revive thy work*: that is the thing he is concerned about. But, I trow, few of us are taken up about that: Who is he that goes about this duty aright amongst us all with these words, *O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, &c.?*

2^{dly}, We have the grounds of it: it was for fear of threatened wrath and judgments; *When I heard thy speech*: what was that? when I heard of thy terrible judgments, I could not hold my peace for fear of the interest of God; *When I heard thy speech, I was mightily troubled*; it affected me when I heard thy speech, Mic. vi. 9. *The Lord's voice crieth unto the city; and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.* Rods have a voice; and he gives a charge

charge to take heed unto them. Thus the Lord's judgments affected him. And then

3dly, We have the thing the prayer is for; and it is contained in three things: (1.) It is a reviving of his work. O that the Lord would yet keep his work from ruin, and put the life in it that wicked men endeavour to deprive it of; even these wicked Chaldeans: This is the thing he prays for.

(2.) It is a hasty speech, it is a broken speech; he breaks off abruptly: *Make known in the midst of the years.* What is it that he should make known? Why, it is that he would give some gracious manifestation of his love, in order to their escape in the midst of these years: in the midst of their captivity in Babylon, give some proof that thou art God; and let thy mighty hand be seen; and give to us some special manifestation of thy hand, that this is thy work. The

(3.) Thing is, that he deprecates wrath because of sin; and he prays that it might be turned away: *In the midst of wrath remember mercy.* For all my prayers, I am afraid of wrath: We are a sinful people; we are under great wrath; he prays, Turn it away, if it be thy good will: *In the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.*

This is the scope of the whole. We cannot stay to speak to every subject herein: but a word from the inscription, *A prayer of Habakkuk upon Sigionoth*; or, to the several tunes, as in the margin of some of your Bibles. Some render it, a prayer concerning the strange dispensation of the Chaldeans, pressing them on all hands: A prayer indeed, many ways for the comforting of the poor people of God. You will see this upon the margin of some of your Bibles, *upon the several songs or tunes.* You will see that the prayers of the people of God are not all upon one and the same tune (so to speak). Some being upon one address, and some tune upon another. Sometimes they are up, and sometimes down. His people have sometimes cause to mourn, and sometimes cause to rejoice: Sometimes their hearts are up, and again sometimes they are down.—I say, his people in their addresses unto God are various: sometimes like Hezekiah, when he says, *Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter, I did mourn as a dove, &c.* This oftentimes falls out to be the case of the people of God; and sometimes they roar and cry out, as David: *My bones waxed old through*

my roaring all the day long, Psal. xxxii. 3. And sometimes they are made to look, sigh and groan, and can do no more. Their addresses are changeable; and what are the reasons of this? Why their exercises are so, as David; sometimes he says,—*I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul, &c.* This was his exercise, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1. and yet again he says, Psal. xxiii. 4.—*Yea, tho' I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.* Many and various are the exercises of the people of God in their addresses unto him.

Well, then, Sirs, I name them for this end, to let folk see the worthlessness of many of our prayers: as I trow, the prayers and addresses that many of us have, are not much worth: What is the reason of this? Why, there is no alteration: we care not whether the work of God be up or down: few changes and little exercise. I fear, the exercise and address of many in this place that hold their heads high, are little worth.—Many folk say, God be thanked, I never changed my prayer: many folk never change their tune and their prayers; except it be for some worldly thing, which will perhaps make you turn your tune; but though the interest of God, and your soul's case be of so great concernment, you never trouble yourselves with these. O this will cast many folk that can pray; or think so. But remember the prayers of his people are various, and their exercises are changeable.

Again, their prayers cannot be spiritual, because there are no changes, nor ups and downs with them: they cannot address themselves to God.—I cannot tell, if their prayers be much worth; on the contrary, it is a good evidence that our addresses to God either for the work of God, or in behalf of our own soul's case, are acceptable, when you find many ups and downs in your own soul's case. But I trow, Sirs, there is little of this exercise amongst us at present.

But the next thing, or note of observation, is, that the first word imports, that the prophet is looking upon the prosperity of the wicked, and the sad case of the godly. When persons look to that, they will think themselves far out: it is mysterious to flesh and blood to see the Lord casting down his own people, laying them low, and suffering them to be trodden and trampled upon as so many earth's worms, by enemies and adversaries, who have all things going well with them. In this we will

will find a perplexing business : how did it perplex Jeremiah ? chap. xii. 1. when he saw such dispensations, this made him say,—*Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper ? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously ?* And yet he dares not say, but the *Lord is righteous* : and in the third verse, he prays the Lord to pull them out like sheep for the slaughter : this was perplexing to him. And Asaph was so perplexed, Psalm lxxiii.—You must not fear at religion : new beginners, fear not ye at the cross : but if ye get the cross upon your back as well as others, will ye be afraid ? or will ye suffer ? will ye lay down your lives, if called unto it † ? The Psalmist wonders ; and it is matter of admiration, that he was afflicted all the day long ; and when he gets strokes all the day long, it was mighty perplexing unto him, as in Psal. lxxiii. 14. *For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.* He was saying, as you will say, *I have washed my hands in innocency* : but, Sirs, you see he turns unto another tune. Well then, set yourselves for it : know, that though you meet with evil things ; yet the good of all is coming. Therefore let not this fear you at religion and the pursuit of godliness, though it was perplexing to the psalmist.

And then notice this : that it was a prayer of Habakkuk upon Sigionoth : it makes a perplexing case, the wicked prospering, and the church cast down : we wot not what to do ; we are plagued, and they prosper.—The best way to get out of all this, is, to go to God by prayer : Habakkuk prayed, (as you have it in the text) and that godly man in Psal. lxxiii. falls a-praying, when almost off his feet, for all his rash saying, that he *had cleansed his heart in vain*, &c. and he continued ay till he went to the sanctuary, and then he saw their end.—*Then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places* : it was not all gold that glistered with them : nay, it was not so much as the picture of happiness : *Surely thou hast set them in slippery places* ; and what follows ? *thou castest them down to destruction.*—The prosperity of the wicked sometimes is not long ; and you know not how soon the vengeance of God may light upon them.—Many, now a-days, say that their moun-
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tain

† Here remark, that this worthy teacher laid down his own life for it at the market cross of Edinburgh next year with Mr. Kid as notified above.

tain stands strong, and that they shall never be moved; but ye know not how soon they shall be brought to destruction, and so come to nought. And thanks be to God, that all that they can get of his people here is but temporary;—but the sorrows of the wicked are for long *ever-more*.

Do not grudge for your persecution and hard usage. You must be content with what you get along with the rest of his children, while here away, and get what he allots you.—Of many things that might be noticed from these words, we offer only the following doctrine.

DOCT. *That God's work may be near ruin, but not quite ruined.—REVIVE THY WORK.*

1st, The case of the church and people of God may not only be near ruin, but there may be much deadness upon their spirits. *Revive thy work in the midst of the years.*

2^{dly}, They may not only be near ruin and dead, but also insensible of it: all of us have need to pray for reviving.

3^{dly}, This may be for years, or a considerable time. *Revive thy work in the midst of the years.* They were long in Babylon: a considerable time in trouble. We have not yet had so long a time of it, but we may have more. Yea, you may have fifty years of it. If you weary for these sixteen or eighteen years, how would you stand it out, were it fifty years, or a hundred years, or, it may be, all your days? O say you, how will we weather it out? But you must go to God. There are great acts and wondrous works to do to lengthen out the troubles of his people in these days. One thing to comfort you, is, your troubles will end shortly. But the troubles of the wicked are endless troubles. But

4^{thly}, Another thing, and then we shall close, lest we should hinder the rest of the work of the day §; and that is, to speak a little of the duty of the hearers of the gospel in this their day: They should be much taken up about his work, and the reviving of his work.—But what is your work that ye must be about? Ye have been toiling all your days: but now the work we would have
you

§ It appears that Mr. Archbald Riddel preached in the afternoon a from Isa. lxvi. 13.

you about is the Lord's work : *Revive thy work in the midst of these years.* There are five or six works you must be about in your day. The

1. Thing he calls a work, is, the gathering of a church unto himself: and who should be more careful in this than you? Isa. xix. 25. *Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of mine hands, and Israel mine inheritance.* Then be careful about the church: O Sirs, this may give a deep challenge to many, that this piece of work has been little cared for by you. What care have you taken of it? If we were all brought in to give our answer, what would we say? It is true, we are no more called to be careful than our stations reach; for magistrates and those in power you see how careful they have been about that: and look even to ministers, and see what care they have had about his work. O, I fear, ministers have not been so careful of his church as we ought to have been: this is lamentable.—This belongs to you and every one of you, in your particular stations. This belongs to magistrates and ministers, masters of families and servants: No, say they, what have we to do? What can we do? Nothing. Are you sent into the world to do nothing? Ay, you should both do, and be able to do: Though you be not high members, you may be useful in your station: though not the hand or the head, yet you may be a finger or toe. So we should be all careful of the church of God: but what should we do in reference to the church? Why, look to the text; and if you can do more, lay out all your interest, all you can do or have, for the church in your capacity; and if ye can do no more, will you pray for the church, the work, and interest of God. Pray that he would advance his own work, and take care of his own church. Another thing; are we not in a capacity to do more, even to ride and to run, and to act and do for the church? Now who does that? We are all at ease: and the work of God is laid bye. But says the Spirit of God, Isaiah xlv. 11.—*Concerning the works of my hands, command ye me.*—Then,

2. There is the reformation and building up of his house. The house of God gets a stop and hindrance: See then to the building of his house; see Nehemiah chap. iii. This was one of his works that they were to fall about; to reform and build the house of God, that the Babylonians had destroyed: you should have that

done: that is one of his works, and we should all endeavour to do it. O that we could get it done. Some are not in a capacity to do this; and yet labour to do all that ye can. O Sirs, we had once a well ordered church: but what is it now? and what have we done for the building up of his work? as in that second chapter of Haggai; a sad word; they made a cross; they wanted gold and silver, &c. It is true, they had many enemies: they had laid by the building the house of God, and they fell to building their own houses: and he reproves them for it, chap. i. 4. *Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house by waste?* Have not many done so now a-days? And this house is lying in ashes: this is lamentable indeed, that we have not been careful in rebuilding and restoring the house of God. Let not this man and that woman; but let every one's conscience tell him or her of this. A

3. Piece of work, that the Lord calls his work; and that is, the preaching of the gospel; that we should take care of. We should all (as it were) hold our hands fast about this; were it not for some, we would not know where the preaching of the gospel would go.—Ye should promote the preaching of the gospel: it is one of his works: it is his great work. Now a-days, Sirs, and that he sends some through with the preaching of the gospel, and since he is doing so, ought we not to take care of it? It concerns our eternal happiness: and will it not be an aggravation of our grief, if we shall be found careless of it? So that it is a wonder, that he should have this care of us at all; it is a wonder, that this earth opens not its mouth to swallow us up, and that we go not down to the pit, seeing we are so careless of that which is our eternal happiness. O how careful will we be about our own things in the world! It is an old Proverb, “Who should care for us who care not for ourselves.”—There is a

4. Piece of his work; and that is, the worship of God. It is called the work of God, Neh. x. 33. *All that was to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.* Nehemiah was careful about these things; and O that there were many Nehemiahs in our day, to pray for the work and worship of God. We cannot tell what we are, nor what we have done, in order to the worship of the house of God, either magistrate, minister, or people, master, or servant: Little care-

carefulness about the house of God, and for his worship. No care is taken to get it set up in our families: O little care amongst us that the whole work of God should be so seen unto. And

5. This is his work, the work of grace in your and my heart; and O how little care is there about that? it is called the work of grace, 1 Cor. xv. It is one of his works; therefore you would do well to see what care you have taken of that; or how to get it, or how to keep it when gotten: this is his work, says our blessed Lord himself, John vi. 29.---*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent, to get faith's exercises, when rocks of temptation are like to drive you over: It is fit then to get faith in exercise. O if we had faith to lay hold upon his promises, we might stand upon our feet, for all that enemies could do unto us. But we want faith, and that takes us off our feet: and if we be right, we will not join with the courses of these times. Judge ye, they wanted faith to believe that he was able to bring them through this world, and yet he was able to lay down meat before them? Christ said unto his disciples, Luke xxii. 35.---Lacked ye any thing? and they said, nothing. The very fear of want made us all go wrong; we wot not, if ever we all shall go right again: and then there is his grace; not labouring to get that into our hearts has done us much evil. O labour to get it, if you have never yet had it. Will you say, I shall never be so indifferent as I have been in this? I lived carelessly; but I shall never do so again. Do not then want the faith of his bearing you through: the want of the faith of this has made many of us go wrong in these days we live in.*

6. That is another of his works, that we have the gospel preached unto us. *Ye are all partakers of my grace, Phil. i. 7. i. e. of the gospel. O indeed, if you were partakers of these good things, God has laid these things before you; and see that ye cast not at your meat; and when he offers opportunities unto you, have a care that you cast not at them: let every one of you take care, that ye be made partakers of the gospel, and that, for these three or four reasons.*

1. Because we have many enemies; therefore do not join with them: Ye lie by, and say nothing; that is not enough; when there are so many stated enemies

up and down the land, we lie by. O see to this: what is all the malice and enmity of all our enemies, malignants, and prelates, and all these papists? Do you not see that the event and upshot of all their acts is, What shall we do to bear down all these pieces of God's work? Many attempts they have made; yet thanks be to God, they have not yet got these broken. Then have a care of these things, because they are in great hazard. A

2. Reason for taking care of these work, is, Because that they are his works: and if so, then the neck of all your difficulties will be broken: if you get the work of reformation and the building of his house set on foot, and have a care of all this, the rest will be easy work: these mountains will become a plain before you.

3. Another reason: as they are his works, therefore they should be taken care of; especially to have the gospel preached and promoted, and to have the house of God builded, and things in his house rectified: these tend much to the glory of God. When all these things go well on, O what advantage will there be in this! and if we do not so, it will be reckoned that we are for his dishonour, and not for his glory.

And then again these things, Sirs, contribute much to the edification of his saints, and the good of souls: to have the gospel preached, and the word hid in your hearts, to have the house of God rebuilt, his work revived, and things brought unto its purity and due order; is there not much good in all this? and where will you get good, if it is not therein? it is no where else. And

Lastly, They tend to the salvation of souls as well as to their edification; these are the means: It is the grace of God for our salvation that appears in the gospel preached unto us, that we may be made to deny all ungodliness and fleshly lusts. So all this contributes much to the salvation of souls: will you not be careful then for these? Sirs, will you not be careful for your back and belly (as we use to say) and worldly things? it should be so.—But we should bring in the work of God to be the great work. This is your work, and our first work: But we bring it in last. We wonder how you think God should be favourable unto us while we do not think, and make God and his work our first endeavour and main study above all. O that we were so negligent of his work! O Sirs, wonder at this.

Now for application, Since it is so that this should be the great care of all, to have a care of the work of God, *revive thy work*, &c. May not this doctrine bring home a sad rebuke and challenge to many a conscience? must not this be a sore regret? and we should lament it, and these folk who are regardless of this must have evil consciences, considering how little we and they have done for reformation and rebuilding of his house and the reviving of his work and worship. When we reflect upon that, it is a wonder we are in our right wits: it is a thing that brings on that dreadful sentence from God; wo to them that *are at ease in Zion*, that are not careful about the work of God; and these who lay themselves by, and are useless: and how can they escape this curse, when they might have been useful for the work of God? How can such as lie by think to be from under that woe?

The next use of application is this, is it so? then, to bring it home to you, I offer these three motives; and I shall pass by other things that might be noticed, and come to a close.

1. Will you be careful of these means, because there are few amongst many? I have little hope of them that will not be careful.—There are many that are stated enemies: these never regard the work. This should engage us to be careful about his work.—Are there any careful for the work? will you go in amongst the rest? O that there are so few to follow the Lord, and to be careful for his work! Are not there some that once seemed to be friends, and are now enemies? should not that then press us all to be friends to, and careful about his work? And should it not put us all upon praying, *revive thy work*. He may say unto us, as he said unto his disciples, *Will ye also go away, and leave me?* These that are profane, and have a profession, and no more, let them go away; but you that profess friendship, will ye go away and leave him? will ye do so? It is a sad matter to leave him. There are many works advantageous to you; but you never put your hand to a piece of work more advantageous unto you then this; to lay out yourselves for God. I will tell you amongst other things, the Father likes not that child that comes not to him: Though he be angry at them, he would love them the better; that they come to him. God loves his church, though he be angry at her. That they come unto him,

he loves it well.—And if some step in to interceed for them, he loves those well. May not God say as in Isa. lix. 16.—*And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor?* A fore matter, there are so few. O will you be more about this work? A

2. Motive. It is his work, his house: therefore, you should do all you can to build and rebuild it. Do all the service to him you can: and this will intitle you to the promise, Isa. lxvi. 10.—*Rejoice with her all ye that mourn for, and be glad with her, all ye that love her.*—When the work of God shall be restored and revived, they shall be comforted; and ye shall have a share therein with them.

3. There is nothing more evidences your being children indeed than this, Psalm cxxxvii. 6.—*Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem before my chiefest joy, &c.*—All Zion's children do this; and they are but Edomites that mind not his work: in this Psalm they are called so.—And then you cannot do a worse turn to your own estate inward or outward, then to be careless of the work of God. *They sat in their own cieled houses:* but what next? they had served much, but brought in little: *ye eat, but ye have not enough,* as you will see it, Hag. i. 6. It was God's judgment upon them. Ye that are careless, you cannot do yourselves a worse turn. The reason of this you have in the 9th ver. *Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.* Well, Sirs, take heed to this: it is because his house is lying desolate, and they are building their own houses.—But I shall say no more.

May the Lord blefs what has been spoken, and to his name be the glory. *Amen.*

N. B. Although this Sermon was neither so correct either in method or matter in the manuscript as could have been wished; yet being the only Sermon of Mr. King's that I ever saw,—I thought for the memory of the Author, it should here have a place amongst others.

T W O

S E R M O N S

Preached in the Parish of CATHCART, by Mr.
JOHN WELCH.

S E R M O N I V.

2 CORINTHIANS V. 10.

*For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ;
that every one may receive the things done in the body,
according to that he hath done, whether it be good or
bad.*

[FORENOON'S SERMON.]

THERE is a generation of men in the world, that can neither be enticed nor compelled: they can neither be allured nor persuaded unto their duty. But they and their duty are at such variance and distance, that nothing will persuade them to it: neither promises nor threatenings, love nor terror, strokes nor allurements, nothing will persuade and reconcile them to their duty. Again, there is a number of men and women that nothing will divert, or separate them and their duty.—I say, they are of the contrary disposition: Nothing will persuade the one unto their duty; and on the contrary, nothing can separate the other from their duty. Paul was such a one: It was long ere he fell unto duty; and it was long ere he was reconciled unto it: He got a sore onset of the law, and a terrible stroke of

humiliation, ere he and his duty were reconciled together.—But from the time that God did him saving good, he was the man that abode by his duty. Now he is come at his duty, and neither threatenings, baits, strokes, nor allurements can separate or set him and his duty at variance again.—But contrary to all impediments, he resolves to go on: no opposition or impediment can hinder or divert him from it. These indeed were many, and coming from divers airths; sometimes from Pagans, and sometimes from the Jewish church, who clave to the Mosaical rites and ceremonies, and sometimes from false brethren: Yet nothing could separate him and his duty in preaching the gospel; but still he pressed forward in spite of every contrary wind of opposition.

Now, in this chapter he gives a reason for his strict adherence unto his duty.—I know, says he, *we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.* We must all stand there: **I** that preach, and you that hear, must stand before this judgment seat; and because I am persuaded what a terrible judge he is, therefore I hold at my work to beseech men to be reconciled to God, to intreat them to forsake their sinful courses: therefore, says he, I will make it always my work to obteit them to turn from them, and live; and if they will not, to tell and persuade them that they shall die. *Therefore knowing the terrors of the Lord we persuade men, &c.*

In the words there are two things considerable.

First, The doctrine which is set down in the verse we read, *for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*

Secondly, There is the use of the doctrine for improvement, in the beginning of the 11th verse, *Therefore knowing the terrors of the Lord, &c.* Or ye may take it thus: there is a doctrine or proposition laid down in the text,—*We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

Then there is the conclusion drawn from it, which is this,—*We persuade men*; as if he had said, seeing there will be such a day, we cease not, night nor day, *to persuade men.*

But I shall speak a word to the doctrine; and there are these three or four things considerable it.

1st, There must be a day of judgment; for there is a judge, and there are parties to be judged; and there is a reward: therefore it must follow, that there will be a day of judgment. And

2^{dly}, There

2dly, There is one that is to be judge; and it is Jesus Christ the second Person of the blessed Trinity; who is appointed of the Father to be judge.—Therefore it is called, *the judgment seat of Christ.*

3dly, There are those that are to be judged, and these are all men; *we must all appear*: all that are here and else where; all that are dead, and all that are living, and all that ever shall live; all from Adam to the end of the world shall appear on this day. And

4thly, There is the business of the day for which it is appointed: it is appointed that every one may receive a reward according to his works: which includes, first, an examination or trial; after that a sentence will be passed;—and then there will be a putting of the sentence into execution. Great will be the business of that day.

We shall draw all that we intend to say unto this one point of doctrine.

DOCT. That there shall be a day of judgment appointed, wherein every one, man and woman, shall receive a reward or punishment, suitable to the measure of their works or offences.

In speaking to this point of doctrine, I shall speak a word unto the following particulars.

- I. That there will be a general judgment, and what are the reasons for it.
- II. I shall speak a word unto what day this will be.
- III. Who will be the judge of that day.
- IV. I shall speak a word to the sentence, and the execution of that sentence. And

Lastly, A short word of application, or what improvement we are to make of this great doctrine. And

I. There are very good reasons why there will be a day of judgment. And

1. Because there is many a wrong and unjust sentence passed here upon earth. Many times the guilty are absolved, and the innocent sentenced and condemned: oft-times the godly are cried out against and condemned as malefactors, when the wicked of the world are rewarded and set in *high places.* Therefore, there must be a day

of judgment, when all evil sentences, all acts of parliament, all condemnators, all persons and causes whatsoever, shall come to a hearing again.—It shall be a day wherein the righteous judge of all the earth, will try, whether ye have been right or wrong judged; a day for judging these causes that were wrong judged on earth. Many times the people of God are here looked upon as heretics and seditious persons; because they follow their duty, and obey God rather than man. Therefore a day must be, when such wrong sentences must be judged and heard a-new again. But, you'll say, they have laws and acts of parliament for all that they do. It is true, as to the most part of all the martyrs that have been burnt, beheaded and hanged, it was still the breaking of a law, or disowning an authority that was laid to their charge, excepting a few that have been privily murdered. Even our Lord Jesus himself, they pleaded the breaking of the law against him. So, I say, this is a good reason. This day of judgment both must and will be, because of so many wrong sentences here passed on earth. This made Solomon say, *I saw the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there; and I said in mine heart that God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.* There are many wrongs done, that are never judged nor punished; and there are many that are wrong judged; and therefore, says the Lord, there shall be a solemn day, wherein not only all causes, but all persons shall be judged.

I assure you, that are followers of Christ, it concerns you to be fixed in the faith of this truth; for sometimes the people of God will be at this, that they know nothing in all the world that they can take comfort or encouragement from, to bear them through, but this; that there is a day coming wherein *God will judge the righteous and the wicked*: that there shall be a day wherein it shall be known who has been the knave, and who has been the honest man; a day wherein the people of God shall be comforted, and both parties heard; when the Lord will ask, Wherefore was all this blood shed in the city and in the fields? Wherefore, and upon what account was this? Why, blessed Lord, will the people of God say; it was for adhering to thee, and abiding stedfast by our covenant; even for this, that we would not perjure ourselves, and forsake and disclaim thee.—Then will the Lord say to the wicked and the persecutor?

tor :—Yea, and was it for this that ye took so many lives, and put up so many heads and hands ? and was it even for this that ye stigmatized, imprisoned and banished so many ? and was it for this that ye made so many poor widows and orphans ? Believe, believe it, Sirs, the business will yet come to a hearing again : many that have been condemned here, will in that day be absolved ; and those that sentenced them, sentenced with an everlasting irrevocable sentence, *Depart from me, &c.*—Therefore, commit your cause, case and business, in the way of well-doing, unto the righteous Lord, who will make a glorious account at that day of those who do so. Believe it, that such a day will be, that whatever injustice ye suffer now, yet your cause will not go so ; but it will come to a hearing again : therefore commit your cause unto him, in *well-doing, as to a faithful Creator.* A

2. Reason is, because there are many things hid and secret now, that must be made manifest in that day. There are many things done in secret, of which the manifestation and discovery depend upon that day : and that is another reason why there must be a judgment-day, wherein God will bring every work to be tried, whether it be good or evil. It will also be a day of recompence : and such a day must be to bring many hid things to light : how many murderers have died, and never one knew it ? how many secret adulterers, whoremongers, witches and wizards have died, and never man knew it ? And O the works of darkness that will be brought to light at that day ! how many hid hypocrites and sabbath-breakers will that day bring to light ? and for this very reason there must be a day of judgment, that many secret and hidden things may be made manifest. A

3. Reason is, because there are some here, that plead themselves now to be above the judgment of any here ; or that they are not to give a reason for what they do here to any but God ; and therefore there must be such a day, wherein not only all causes, but all persons shall be heard and judged, be they high or low, be they rich or poor : the judge and the judged shall be all heard again. This is another reason for this day, because some plead exemption from all judgment now, or to give any account for what they do ; and therefore a day of judgment there shall be. A

4. Reason

4. Reason I shall observe, is this, Because the people of God are longing for it : they pray and cry for it, and they hope for it ; and God has commanded his people to wait for it : it is their desire ; they cry, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* And—*how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ?* So the godly wait and pray for it ; but the wicked hope and desire that it may never be : and whether will he hear and answer the prayer of the godly, or grant the desire of the wicked, think ye ? or whether will he frustrate the hopes of his people, or the hopes of his enemies ? And therefore, there must be a day of judgment, otherwise God will fail to hear his people. And

Lastly, God has been manifesting some of his properties : he has been manifesting his mercy : he has glorified and magnified it above all his other works : therefore, there must be a day for the manifesting of his justice and holiness ; now this day will be a solemn day of the manifestation of that property of God upon all the ungodly by judgment. So much for the reasons to prove that such a day there will and must be.

II. A word now to the second thing, and that was what a day this will be. In speaking to which, there are five or six things observable concerning this day.—
And

1. I say, it shall be the last day ; *the great and terrible day of the Lord.* After it, there shall never be day nor night any more ; it is the last day : there shall be no day after it : no sun, moon nor stars ; no heavens, no earth, nor sea at all : all will be then dissolved, and *burnt up with a fervent heat.* All shall melt, and be gone ; you'll say, what for a day will this be ? I answer, it will be the great and last day ; and as the day will be great, so great will the transactions of that day be.

2. As it will be a great day, so it will be a terrible day : *the great and terrible day of the Lord* : O nothing but terror : terror within and terror without : terrible to the wicked, unto many a man and woman, terrible to the persecutors and enemies of God and his work.—How terrible to see the Son of man coming in flaming fire to take vengeance on all the workers of iniquity ! How terrible to see the earth shaking and quaking, and the elements melting away *with fervent heat* ! not only will the
object

object be terrible : but men's hearts will be filled with terror ; so it will be a terrible day in these four respects :

1. In regard it is the day of accounts and reckoning. It is the day wherein we must reckon for all we have done ; yea, for every secret thing, whether good or evil. It is a day wherein we must reckon for every day ; for every minute and moment of time we have had ; a day wherein the minister must reckon for his flock ; the master for his family ; the parent for his children ; the elder for those of his quarter ; and the magistrate for those under his jurisdiction.

2. In respect that it is a day wherein God will thoroughly correct the wicked and ungodly ; a day when they shall be made to acknowledge their guilt, and the facts charged against them ; a day wherein God will libel his enemies, and he will lead probation, and prove it against them before angels and his people : he will then lay open the book of every man's conscience, and there will be as much found in every man and woman, as will fully prove and say amen unto the whole charge laid against the sinner. And

3. It will be terrible in respect of the terrible sentence that will be then passed against them.—How terrible will it be to hear that sentence pronounced,—*Depart from me, ye cursed, unto everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!*

4. It will be also terrible in respect of the execution of the sentence ; terrible to hear the shrieks and cries of the damned ; terrible to hear the cries of kings, princes, earls, lords, lairds, captains, rich and poor, high and low ; to hear millions and millions of millions, crying *to hills and mountains to fall on them, and cover them from the face of the Lamb* ; for yonder he is coming whom we despised ; and his blood we had in our offer for washing away of sin ; but we despised and trampled it under foot. O such a cry will then be : yonder he is coming, that is to be my judge, that I would not have reign over me:—And *who can stand in the day of his wrath?* It will be terrible to hear the cries of damned reprobates, crying *to hills and mountains, which cannot hear ; yonder he is coming, whom I refused and would not hear, when he offered to make peace with me.*

3^{ly}, As it will be a terrible day to strangers, so it will be a joyful day to friends, that is, to the saints ; a
day

day of joy and singing of songs, a day of redemption, consolation and salvation, something of this is spoken of, Isa. xxv. 9. *Lo, this is our God: we have waited for him; and he will come and save us,* He is coming to receive them to himself, and to take vengeance on his enemies, and the troublers of his Israel. This will cause joy in the hearts of the godly; he is coming; but he is my brother that is coming: Indeed, if our judge were our enemy, as he is to the wicked, we might fear it; or if the devil and wicked men were to be our judges: but it is he who loves our souls, and whom our souls love, who is to be our judge: it is Jesus Christ who shed his blood for us, that died for us that we might live: and will he now condemn us? And what a joyful meeting must this be.

4thly, As it will be a joyful day, so it will be a wonderful day. Every thing in it will have a more wonderful and astonishing aspect than another. It will be a day wherein there shall be nothing but wonders of wonders; so that we have need of faith. It will be wonderful to see all persons that ever lived, live, or shall live in the world, gathered unto one place, and appear before Christ: it will be wonderful to see him that was mocked, buffeted and spit upon, judged and condemned before Pontius Pilate; to see him arraign and pannel them before his judgment seat.

5thly, As it will be a great, a terrible, a joyful and a wonderful day; so it will be an uncertain day. It will give you no warning of its coming: *it will come as a thief in the night.* It will come unexpected and unlooked for, both by saint and sinner. Some will be reading, praying, meditating and preaching: others will be swearing, lying, stealing, whoring, and drinking. It is true, there will be signs before it, such as, the sun will be darkned, the moon turned into blood, &c. There are also some general tokens, that it will not be as yet, because the scripture is not yet fulfilled: there are certain things promised spoken of in scripture to be before it, to be yet accomplished. I say it is a day most uncertain; therefore *watch and pray, for ye know not the day nor the hour, when the son of man cometh.* But

Lastly, It will not only be an uncertain; but it will be a day of gathering together, and a parting day, a day of separation; even such a day as never was or shall be the like

like again: the sheep shall be separated from the goats; and the wicked shall stand in the assembly of traitors.— It will part many a king and his subjects; minister and his flock, master and servant, parent and child; it shall be such a parting day, that *two men shall be lying in one bed: the one shall be taken, and the other left; the one saved, and the other condemned.* Many an old acquaintance and relation shall be separated; even the husband and the wife, the one shall be set on the right hand and the other on the left: it will set the king and his subject, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left; it will set the father on the right hand, and the son on the left. As it will be a day of meeting, so it will be a day of parting; even of near and dear relations never to meet again. It will be an everlasting separation. Those on the right hand shall immediately pass into glory, and so be *for ever with the Lord*: so the other shall depart to be *for ever with the devil and his angels in everlasting torment.* The

III. Thing I proposed to speak to, was, who shall be the Judge? A day of judgment there will be; but who will be the judge in that day? It is called in the text, the judgment-seat of Christ; Jesus Christ the second person of the blessed Trinity is appointed judge; and that for these reasons:

1. The Father has given it unto the Son as a reward for undertaking the work of man's redemption, and for all his sufferings in the accomplishing of that work; and has put this honour upon him to be the judge, *because he is the Son of man.*

2. Christ is appointed judge for the comfort of his own people, that they may come the more boldly unto him: and will it not be comfortable and encouraging for them to come unto him, who is their elder brother, friend and husband; and not only so, but who spared no pains in coming down from heaven to shed his heart's blood for their salvation. And

3. That it may be to the greater terror and confusion of the wicked. What terror will it be to those who judged and persecuted him in his members on earth; nay, to see him they thus rejected and slighted to be their judge? If it had been another, the matter would have been the less; but it is he that I had in my offer: it is he whose blood for cleansing I refused and

trampled under foot, and counted an *unholy thing* : it is he whom I persecuted in his members, &c. that is now to be my judge.

Here it may be enquired, who are the persons to be judged ? I answer, it is all.—*For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.* All that are living, have lived, or ever shall live ; all rich and poor, high and low, old and young, godly and ungodly, fools and wise, the complier and the sufferer, the persecutor and the persecuted ; he that has been false, and he that has been faithful in his covenant ; all must and shall appear there without exception.

IV. I shall now speak a word to the sentence that shall be passed : and there are two kinds of sentences to be passed : the first upon the godly in these words,—*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, &c.* the other upon the wicked in this manner,—*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* And then the execution of this sentence without all remedy and delay will follow : there will be no intermission or interval betwixt the sentence and its execution. Judges here will pass a sentence of death ; but defer the execution of that sentence.—But no sooner will the judge pronounce that sentence, *Depart from me, &c.* but the sinner must away without delay.—And again here there shall be no pity : though the sinner should cry out, O judge, give me leave but to speak, and hear me but one word : no, there is no hearing now, but an irrevocable sentence past and put in execution.—Then many a man and woman shall cry out, Hear, dear Lord, have mercy upon me : I thought that thou wast all mercy. But he shall answer, it was mercy that was offered unto thee many a-day ; but thou refusedst that. Then, Grace, grace, will the sinner cry : But the judge shall then reply, many a day thou hadst grace in thy offer ; but thou refusedst it : Now, the day of mercy and grace is gone.—It will then be in vain to cry, open, open unto us, Lord ; and cast us not into this place of torment ; for the judge will not hear : he will have no more pity : but say, *Devil, take and bind them hand and foot,* and carry them to prison, and there will be no resistance, away they must. Now, the door of mercy, the door of hope is shut : no more hope, no more mercy. Then the poor sinner is
between

between ſatan and an evil conſcience on the one ſide, on the other ſide his maſter carries him off to everlaſting torment. And O who is able to expreſs the thoughts of the ſinner's heart, when he is adjudged to the company of devils and damned ſpirits, everlaſting fire and everlaſting darkneſs, for ever and ever ? That is the concluſion of the ſentence of the wicked. And the concluſion of the ſentence of the godly, is, *Come, enter into the joy of your Lord :—And they ſhall be for ever with the Lord.*

Before I come to the application, I might give you ſome reaſons or motives that cauſed me to pitch upon this text at this time. And

1. That it might imprint or leave ſome ſtrong impreſſion of this day upon your hearts : for, I think it is little believed, and as little thought of by the moſt part. The wicked hope it ſhall never be ; and for the godly, they do not firmly believe it. Therefore, I choſe this ſubject, to ſee if it would leave ſome impreſſion on your hearts. I remember, I have heard of ſome who ſaid, they never ſaw a great gathering of people, but it brought this awful day into their remembrance.

2. It may be, ſome of you will be brought before man's judgment-ſeat, and even for this day's work, ere it be long. The Lord has made this trial go through the land ; and it has not only come to the lord, laird, and great man ; but even to the ſhepherd lad, and the kitchen maid. Theſe have been made the object of the malice of this ungodly generation. Well, Sirs, believe this, that although it ſhould be ſo, the buſineſs will come to a hearing again : your cauſe ſhall yet be heard, and at that day you ſhall have a better advocate for you, than any that ſhall be againſt you. If this were believed, there would be more courage than what is amongſt us. The

Laſt motive is this, that ye may not only be made to lay ſin and duty in the balance ; but that ye may be brought to ſay, I durſt not quit Chriſt, nor neglect to hear an offer of ſalvation, when I might have it, for all the hazard that might come upon me : and ye muſt not neglect this, as ye will be answerable for it at this great day of judgment.

But I come now to a word of improvement of what has been ſpoken ; I ſhall give you theſe uſes of the doctrine.

USE 1. We would desire and intreat you to labour to be fixed in the belief and faith of this so often confirmed a truth, that there shall be a day of judgment. The patriarchs make mention of it; the prophets make mention of it; Christ himself speaks of it; and it is a truth commonly known and confirmed in scripture: and yet little believed. Enoch the seventh from Adam speaks of it; Joel speaks of it; Malachi mentions it, *Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, &c.* Paul speaks of this day, Heb. ix. 27. *And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.* And therefore it must be so, if ye believe Christ or his apostles, if ye will believe patriarchs both before and after the flood; all make mention of it; if ye believe the word of God, ye cannot deny this great truth. The thing I would press upon you from this, is, to labour to believe this well-known and confirmed truth, and make it appear by your practice, that ye believe it; by your hearing, reading, conferring, speaking, praying, &c. yea, by your eating, drinking, and every other action in life, that you believe a day of judgment. But your careless, superficial, trifling way of the performance of duty, and your omission of commanded duty, careless praying, hearing and reading, say, ye want the belief of this truth. The gross commission of forbidden sins, say, ye want the belief of this. The great profanity, inebriety, perjury, covenant-breaking, and all such things, say, that ye believe not this truth. What is the reason the drunkard continues in his drunkenness, the persecutor persecutes still? or what is the reason that some will venture on indignation of God before they venture upon the indignation of men, or that so many have forsaken God and foresworn themselves; but even the want of this great doctrine?—Fix yourselves in the faith of this, that you must appear before the judge of the quick and the dead; and answer for all that ye have ever thought or wrought; and the cause of God shall never be wronged by you. But so long as ye want the faith of this, ye shall never do that which is really good.

USE 2. Labour not only for a rational belief of it; but for a faith or belief that may affect the heart: and to help you to this,

1. Consider how certain it is. It is a truth beyond all controversy: it depends upon the faithfulness of God.

If ye believe God's word, ye must believe this also.—Shall all other things there spoken of come to pass, and this one thing fail? wilt thou consider for the bearing down of unbelief, that it depends upon no less then the faithfulness of God, and therefore is most certain.

2. Consider how near it is. It is now a long time since it was said, *The end of all things is at hand*, &c. It is not only certain that it will be, but it is certain that it is not far off. And

3. Consider, how much of your business depends upon that day. The business of the eternal damnation and salvation of souls; the business of absolution or condemnation depends upon the decisions of that day; and therefore labour to believe that such a day will certainly be.

Use 3. A third word of use is this to exhort. And

1. To make your acquaintance with your judge. Labour to get him to be your friend: Labour to get him to take your cause in hand. Labour to have your iniquities blotted out, and to make peace with him, while ye are on the way: and labour to have him for your Lord, teacher, and intercessor.

2. Watch and pray. Be always upon your guard: *Be always ready, for ye know not the day, nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh*. Wait all the days of your appointed time. And

3. From the faith of the doctrine I would press you to the duty of moderation and sobriety. This is the very use the apostle makes of this point,—*for the end of all things is at hand*. Therefore, says he, *let your moderation be known to all men:—and watch and be sober*. O let it be known by your moderate use of the world, and the pleasures thereof, that ye have the firm belief of this truth instamped upon your souls. And

Lastly, You should be making ready for this day: be studying to be mortified to the allurements of this life. Where is the soul that can say, *I am ready, Even so come, Lord Jesus?* Where is the soul amongst you that can truly say, *I have nothing to do? I have got the world crucified; I have got the upper hand of my corruptions. I am even praying,—waiting,—and longing for that day. Have you such a loathing of the world, Sirs, that ye would be content now to see the throne erecting, and the Son of man coming and set thereon?*

Now, (for a Conclusion) I would give you some directions. And

1st, Labour to make sure your interest in Christ. Labour, and be at more pains to be assured of that. Labour to be mortified unto all other things; and never think to get sure gripes of eternal life, till ye come to loose your gripes of the world and all the pleasures thereof. Labour to speak, pray, hear, confer, and do all other duties, as these that believe that great truth, *we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ*. Walk circumspectly; and the more because this is an uncircumspect and ungodly generation. It will not excuse you, that ye lived in the world in an evil time. And O but it be a doleful time, since the gospel was removed; a dreadful time, since Christ and his ordinances went from amongst us.—Neither will it excuse you, that ye lived under a lifeless, and (I may say) a godless ministry: therefore be not conformed unto this present world; but walk circumspectly and wisely. There is many a soul in hell, that might have been in heaven since the gospel was removed (had it been so determined). There is many a soul drinking in the poison of sin and superstition, and wallowing therein, that the gospel might have been a mean of keeping from such a ruining course. And will ye tell me who shall be the men that will get most skaith of the Prelates and Episcopal government, and have reason to curse them ere all be done? I'll tell you, it shall not be the people of God, for all the suffering and hardships they have put them to: no, it shall even be those who have chosen that government, and are joining with them that are persecuting the people of God this day, that shall have most reason to curse them. The Lord's people have reason to pity them. The day is fast coming that they shall be made to say, woe unto us, that ever we gave you a call; and woe unto you that ever ye embraced our call: for from the time ye came to be our ministers, we took liberty unto ourselves to sin, to drink, whore, swear, and forswear ourselves, and commit almost all sorts of wickedness; and ye have been the cause of it; for we knew, ye would never reprove us for it. They that uphold them now, shall only have reason to curse them: and for the godly they have got least skaith of them, and they have least reason to curse them: they may well take a part of your gear and moveables: that ye may spare.—Well, Sirs, get the faith of this, that this day will be, and none can hinder

hinder it : all the world cannot hinder it an hour or moment. *He that will come, shall come, and will not tarry* : Though they have hindred many a preaching, many conventicles, (as they call them) yet all the kings that ever was shall not be able to hinder, or retard this day : it is a day wherein the Lord's people shall be admitted into communion with himself : he shall exalt them above kings and princes : for *they shall be kings and priests unto God and the Lamb for ever*. The poorest man or woman that has an interest in Christ, however contemptible here, shall sit above kings, queens, princes, dukes, marquises, earls and lords of the earth : nay more, they shall be assessors with Jesus Christ in judgment,—*Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world, &c.*

2dly, Try in what state you are : whether in the state and case that your mother left you in ? whether ye be in a state of nature or grace ? whether ye be born again or not ? Seek your conversion, and never rest till ye attain to know, that you shall be freed from that heavy sentence, that shall be passed upon the ungodly. And

3dly, Be much in the exercises of making ready for this day : labour to be preparing for it. Make it an every days work, to put something forward in order to preparation for this day. O it is a great matter to come to judgment : some think it a great thing to appear before men's judgment seat, (as it indeed is). But this is a greater matter to appear before the judge of all the world.—Labour to get an acquaintance with your judge ; to have him not only your friend but your advocate ; labour to have all your bills of defence, right and in order against that day.

4thly, Be much in meditation and in the thoughts of your latter end, Deut. xxxii. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end*. It is a special piece of wisdom to be preparing for death : it will make you be much in preparing for judgment. Improve time ; for there is much of it spent and away : *Gray hairs appear* (amongst you) *here and there* : there is much of your work undone, and upon the improvement of time stands the business of life and death, heaven and hell. Therefore redeem the time : be doubling your diligence. Improve the time that yet remains : redeem it ; take a part of it from your work, from your sleep, your meat. Restrain your humour in

all these things, and rest not till you make your salvation-work sure. And

Lastly, Labour to have a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man; and work out your salvation with fear and trembling: not only work at your salvation, but work out your salvation.—And to his name be the praise. Amen.

S E R M O N V.

2 CORINTHIANS V. 11.

Therefore, knowing the terrors of the Lord we persuade men.

[AFTERNOON'S SERMON,]

CHRIST'S flock in the world is but a little flock; but little as they are, they can scarcely get living in it. Every man is God's by creation, and has a right as a creature unto their Creator. But if any have more a right by becoming God's by election, and an actual resignation of himself to Christ, or is more God's in this respect than others, then that man stands fair for persecution and opposition in the way of duty. The apostle Paul was such an one: he met with many difficulties and much opposition in his work; but he got above all these things: nay, he rather found an encouragement than a hindrance in these. And, Sirs, I'll tell you, that I defy that man that gets a right sight of his need of Christ, of the excellence that is in him, and of the recompence of reward that is laid up for them that love and serve him, to be a sluggard or to continue in the neglect of duty. In the 10th verse of this chapter, the apostle gives an account of the arguments or reasons which moved him to continue at his work: in that verse is the proposition,—*we must all appear*, &c. as ye have heard. And then follows the conclusion in this 11th verse,—

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Therefore knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. We have already spoken to the proposition or doctrine: We come now to speak of the conclusion drawn therefrom: And it may be taken up in these two things.

1st, What Paul resolves to make his work, viz. to persuade men.

2dly, What it was that moved him to make this his work. His work is to persuade men; the motive that moved him to do so, that is the consideration and knowledge of *the terror of the Lord*. By terror is signified either the power and terror of his person, or else the terror of this great judgment day. *Therefore knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men.*—The doctrine is this:

DOCT. *It is the duty of ministers to persuade men.*

But because this is an imperfect proposition of itself, I shall speak a word to these few things following.

- I. What it is that ministers are to persuade men of.
 - II. What are the grounds upon which they are to be persuaded. And
 - III. Give some reasons why it is such a difficult work to persuade men of these gospel truths. And
- Lastly*, A word of application.

I return to the first of these particulars.

I. What it is that ministers are to persuade men of. The particulars are not set down in the text; for that would have run to a great length; and therefore he speaks only in general. But I find these twelve things mentioned in scripture, that we have in commission to persuade you of.

1. We are to persuade men to be convinced of sin, and converted unto Jesus Christ. We are to persuade the ungodly and profane to turn and live; and if they will not turn, they must burn for ever. *Turn ye, and live: why will ye die, O house of Israel?* That is one thing we are to persuade you of, to tell you that Christ is standing at the door and knocking; and he will take it ill, if you refuse to open unto him. It is a great thing to persuade you of the necessity of conversion work or the new-birth; and that except ye be holy, ye shall never

ver be happy ; and we find this work to be the work of both prophets and apostles. Jeremiah cries, *Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings*, Jer. iii. 22. Ezekiel says the same, chap. xxxiii. 11. *Turn ye, turn ye and live, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?* Solomon makes this also his work, Prov. i. 20. 23. *Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets;—turn ye at my reproof.* Jesus Christ himself makes this his work : says he, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* And so did his apostles after him. We are to tell and persuade you to set about the work of faith and repentance ; see Isa. i. 2. Joel ii. 12. We have to persuade you to turn unto God ; and to tell your danger, if ye do not. This presupposes, that every man, and every woman have their back upon God. And we come to you, Sirs, that are yet strangers unto God, and to his Son Jesus Christ, and that are strangers to the Holy Spirit and the grace of repentance : We come to you that are strangers to God : and it is supposed, some of you may be thinking, what brought you here this day ? the Lord knows it was with no view to worldly gain or outward advantage ; but to persuade you to turn unto God, and be converted, and to let you know your hazard and danger while in an unconverted state. And therefore it is your duty to be persuaded : I shall give you these three persuasions in order thereunto.

(1.) If ye will not turn, ye shall die without grace, without faith, repentance, &c. The whole world and much more cannot save you. Therefore turn and ye shall live ; but if not, *ye shall surely die in your iniquities.*

(2.) Turn unto him, and we assure you in his name, it shall be well with you. We tell you he has a fatted calf for you ; robes to put on you : We tell you he has all that can make you happy. Sirs, you shall have a life of it here, and eternal life hereafter. And in the

(3.) Place, We persuade you, that Christ is in good earnest with you. You'll wrong yourselves, if ye accept not of the offer. Nay, ye will perish eternally, if you do not. Therefore, O be persuaded unto this. A

2. Thing we are to persuade men to do, is to tell men to turn, and to turn to purpose : for it is not every sort of turning that will do your turn. We find it in scripture, that every kind of turning has not the everlasting advantage with it. Therefore the Lord enjoins his servants to tell you to make the thing sure ; that you do not

beguile yourselves as to your turning. Tell them, and tell them, that it is not every sort of turning that will do the turn; but ye must turn, and turn with all your heart and soul: this is it, to turn to purpose: and there are four motives I would give you to persuade you to set about a thorough repentance. And

1. For a motive, Consider that it is a want of a thorough turning to God, that undoes many souls. Thus many think they are persuaded that they repent and turn to God; but they are but almost persuaded, and therefore stick there.

2. Consider that if ye repent not thoroughly, if ye turn and turn not with your whole heart, ye but lose all your pains: you never (so to speak) get so much as thanks for your work. And

3. Consider, that ye not only lose your pains, but ye make the thing worse. Many a man by his formal conversion, has a shew of something of the work of God, that makes his case more desperate, than that of the worst Atheist in the world: for many a man's conversion that has lived under the gospel, becomes more desperate and hopeless, then the conversion of heathens: for bid him turn and be converted, it never alters the matter with him; and why? he thinks he has already done it. And

Lastly, Consider but this, who they are that Satan prevails most with to cause them despair: he tempts men to delay, and to halve their repentance, and to be hypocritical therein; and then when he has done that, he will easily prevail to make them despair. Ye did this, and ye did that; ye went this length, and ye went that length, says the enemy; and ye never made your point good; and think ye, that a little more will do your turn now? no, ye need never think, that when ye have provoked God with your formality, a little more will do your turn. Now, these and the like arguments Satan may use to make such despair. Upon these considerations I would have you to make thorough work of repentance; and I pray you consider them. A

3. Thing that ministers have to persuade folk to do, is, to embrace Jesus Christ as he is offered unto them in the gospel. We are to persuade you to close with him, as he has offered himself unto you. This was the work of Isaiah the prophet, Paul the apostle, yea of Christ

himself after his ascension. Says he to the church of the Laodiceans,—*I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him.* That is, take him for a king, prophet and priest, as he is offered unto you ; and to persuade you to this, take the following considerations :

(1.) Consider what ye will do, if ye do it not. Do ye not think the day will come, that ye will wish ye had done it ? The day will surely come that ye will wish ye had taken him on his offer, and that upon the worst of it. And

(2.) Consider that the terms are easy, and so easy, that it is,—*Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye unto the waters : and he that hath no money, come, buy and eat, without money and without price.* Drink and drink fully. Would ye have larger terms than these :—*He that is athirst, let him come ; and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely.* And

(3.) Consider that there is nothing so acceptable and well-pleasing unto God as this : and you'll make many a sad heart by refusing of him. And if ye receive him, it will be well-pleasing to many : it will be the most acceptable thing ever ye did, for ye will thereby please God, angels and saints.—Ye will only displease Satan and wicked men. Put these two in the balance : if ye do the one, ye will please God, angels and the saints ; if the other, ye only displease the devil and wicked men ; and I know not, if ye owe them any thing else. And

(4.) Consider the disadvantages the refusing of him will bring unto you, and the advantages you will have by receiving of him. For

1. Ye may come forward with confidence ; and that even before others, and when hardest set on, as ye see a good example, or way-mark to walk by, in that vii. of the Acts. What made Stephen have such confidence, courage and boldness ? He had two things to support him in this : he knew he was suffering for Jesus Christ, and he knew what was the sufferer's reward. And

2. Ye may by this attain to an assurance of an interest in Christ. Stephen had received Christ : he had an interest in him, and that yields him confidence. And I'll tell you, every one will have much ado to get matters right at death : but some will have more to do than others. Sirs, I'll tell you who will have least to do at death, even these who have been most forward in giving
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a testimony for the cause of Jesus Christ. They have an open door in heaven to see Jesus Christ, as Stephen in his sufferings had.

3. Will you consider, that your sin and guilt is great ; and so your punishment shall also be great : and the more, because you have sinned against the remedy provided, and against mercy. And think ye that they shall be thought worthy, who have done so ? Nay, *of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.* He that despised Moses's law, you know, died without mercy ; and shall ye escape ? Here I would not be in your place who refuse Christ for ten thousand worlds. But a

4. Thing ministers have to persuade people of, is, to acquaint themselves with God : this is a part of our duty to press you to make up your acquaintance with Jesus Christ : You will find, Job xxii. 21. that Eliphaz is sent as a messenger to Job : and what is his errand that he has in commission ? Is it not this, *Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace, thereby good shall come to thee ?* Acquaint yourselves with his mind in his word, and receive the law from his mouth : lay it up in your hearts : labour for wisdom, and with all your getting *get understanding.* Ignorance and unbelief are the destruction of souls : therefore it is ministers work to press them to be acquainted with God. It was Isaiah's work, Isa. xxvii.

5. *Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me.* If ye knew the necessity of being acquainted with God, there would be no need of pressing or persuading of you : for when ye must meet with him after death, the business will depend upon this. When they shall come and say, Lord, Lord ; and pretend kindness to him ; then will he profess, *I never knew you.* May not this persuade you to make this to be your study now in time ? A

5. Thing that we are to persuade people to, is this, to devote and give up themselves wholly by a covenant-relation without reservation. This is what Paul professes in the 15. verse of this same chapter, (wherein our text lies.) That they which live, should not henceforth *live unto themselves ; but unto him &c.* The thing we are to persuade you of, is, to make a real resignation of yourselves, and all ye have, unto him ; so that he may have the command of you, your relations, and all that ye have,

yea, and your life also, when he calls for them; that ye may say, I am not mine own; my children, my means, &c. yea my very life, if he calls for it, is not my own. Make a full, free and absolute resignation of all unto God; and there are these two things to persuade you to this:

1st, Ye stand engaged unto it: there is a tie upon you, as ye are creatures.

2^{dly}, There is the tie of redemption (or redeeming love) and that is the strongest tie of all; so there is a double obligation by creation and redemption lying upon you to do this. A

6. Thing we are to persuade you of; and you have it Acts xxvi. 26. 27. Paul was there persuading Agrippa to be a Christian; and he says *almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*. So the great thing we have to do is to persuade you not only almost, but altogether to be christians. The

7. Thing we have in commission to persuade you of, and that is, obedience unto all God's commands; and this sums up the whole duty God requires of man: Because God requires universal obedience unto his revealed will as ye have it Psal. cxix. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto, all thy commandments*. The

8. Thing we have in our commission is to persuade men to be faithful to Jesus Christ; faithful to his word, his covenant, his cause, interest, and despised truths. The

9. Thing we are to persuade you to, is, to be cheerful under the cross of Christ: and the ground of that is this; *ye shall also reign with him*, they have a fair allowance for suffering, and this we have to tell you of. The

10. Thing we have to persuade you to, is, not only to do duty upon necessity or constraint, but make it your delight to serve God, his commands are so far from being grievous, that they should be our delight: and yet do not trust in duty. The

11. Thing we are to persuade you unto, is holiness *in all manner of life and conversation*; be holy in your eating, and drinking, your discourse, your buying, selling, and in all your conversation. The

12. And last thing we are to persuade men and women to, is to be resolved about the cause of Christ, and religion, and not to halt between two opinions. This was what

what Elijah persuaded the people of Israel of, when he says, 1 Kings xviii. 21.—*If the Lord be God, follow him: and if Baal, then follow him.*—That is another thing ministers should do, to press them to be positive and resolved about, the cause of Christ. Christ himself, when he saw a great multitude following, turned about and said unto them,—*whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.* Christ would have folk to be resolved what they are doing; and in this respect, ministers must tell them to beware of loving the world too much. They must rather hate it, and count it unprofitable: and there is a good ground for it; because it is an enemy to religion: it many times mars communion with God, and his coming to them, and makes many a plea betwixt him and his people. Now these are some of the things ministers must persuade people to.

II. The second thing to be spoken unto, is the grounds or reasons upon which they are to be persuaded or pressed. I shall only mention these four following.

1st. The doing of these things is of absolute necessity. It is necessary that ye be converted and saved,—that ye turn, and turn to purpose,—that ye embrace Jesus Christ as he is offered in the gospel, &c. and so be saved, or else lie in your sins and be eternally damned, and so adjudged unto everlasting torment. Is not the damnation of immortal souls a thing of weight and moment? and therefore is it any wonder that ministers use all arguments to persuade you to do all these things? seeing they are so absolutely necessary that without the doing of them, all the world cannot save you from hell and eternal ruin.

2^{dly}, They are not only absolutely necessary, but of present necessity. They must be done without delay, now or never, no repentance after death; and the longer they are delayed, they become the more difficult to be done: and therefore these things are of present necessity as well as absolutely necessary.

3^{dly} Great are the advantages that attend; and this says, it is a duty to set about such a work. O the advantage of gaining but one soul to Christ! O the advantage of confirming and establishing one soul in the hour of temptation! It is worth all the pains a minister can be at, tho' he should labour all his days, and O the advantage

advantages that come to the soul, and that accrue unto God's glory!

4thly, A fourth ground or reason may be taken from the advantages that follow this so absolute a duty of persuading men to believe, repent, and be saved; and to let them know that if they do not, they shall perish for ever: which brings them to the

III. Thing to be spoken to; and that is notwithstanding so many arguments to persuade ministers to make this their work; yet we find it a work that thrives but very badly in their hands. Now, I shall give you some reasons for this: and first from ministers that have this for their work: Secondly from people themselves: and lastly from the providence of God. And

1st, From ministers who have this for their work: as,

1. They are either such, that although by their words they persuade to such things, and press such things upon others, their own practice says the contrary.— They preach up God and holiness in words; but in deeds they *deny them*. This is the kind of preaching that will never profit nor persuade folk; and it is a kind of preaching that there is enough of in these days we live in. They bid us believe, repent and be holy; but then look and see what their own life and practice bids you do. A

2. Reason is, that there are many ministers whose lives and conversations may be neither scandalous nor profane; yet they are not so serious as the matter requires: they do not press nor persuade folk with that ardency and seriousness that matters of such an absolute necessity and concern do require. Can we think that when it comes thro' our lips to cool and drooping, that it is like to freeze in our mouths, that it will do good or profit others; being delivered with such a slow spirit of indifferency, as it were a thing that might be either done or not done at pleasure. A

3. Reason is, that though sometimes ministers may be somewhat serious and fervent in it; yet they never lay close siege to the heart; but treat matters with a general indifferency. They will tell you, that you should repent; but they never tell you what ye are to repent of, nor the necessity of it: and it will be long ere that kind

of preaching take effect upon the heart, where sin is not particularly reprov'd, nor duty warmly press'd and recommended as a thing of absolute necessity.

2dly, A second reason is from people themselves : and there are two things that greatly occasion this :

1. The great ignorance and unbelief of the hearers. They know not the things that we persuade them of. Nor do they really believe what is preached unto them. When we tell them of communion with God, heaven, eternal life, &c. they know nothing about any of these things.—When we tell them of the necessity of conversion ; that they must either be converted, or they will be condemned ; they do not believe that.—If we tell them that hell is opening its mouth to receive them, that wrath is abiding them, and that there is no escaping of these, but by turning unto God in and thro' Jesus Christ ; that cannot be believed neither. So this is one great reason why men and women will not be persuaded, their ignorance and unbelief. The

2. Obstruction is, that these things we speak and persuade you of, are far out of sight. Heaven that we bid them seek after, is out of view. The hell we bid them beware of, is far out of sight. The

3. Reason comes from the providence of God ; it is, That this work comes so bad speed in our hands. He has taken away the blessing ; he has withdrawn his gracious and comfortable presence. The time was, when the arm of the Almighty went along with the preaching of the word ; but now the blessing, power and efficacy of the gospel is taken away*.

Now, I come to a short word of application ; and therein I shall divide all hearing me into these four or five classes following. And

1. The first sort is such as are altogether strangers to God ; *without God, without Christ, being aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise.* And I conceive, that there are not a few of that denomination here, that are yet strangers to God, and living in darkness. There are numbers of you that
I have

* How applicable is this unto our time and circumstances, wherein the efficacious power of the Spirit attending the word is comparatively gone, so that on us is accomplished that word, Heb. iv. 2.—*But the word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that hear it.*

have lived under the drop of the gospel, that are yet in a natural estate. Ye were ignorant Atheists before; and ye are so yet. The thing I would say unto you is, that what we came this day unto you for is this; that you would now look about you, and consider your ways, as ye have it, Hag. i. 3. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways.* This thing the Lord would have you do. O consider what you are, and what you are doing.— Consider in what estate you are in by nature, and whither you will go, if you continue in that estate. Consider your ways, and turn unto the Lord, and live; seek that the Lord would turn you unto himself. But if you turn not, make ready for hell, that meeting place of all torment and woe, and even a hotter hell than the hell of Sodom. O make you for torment, and that an intolerable torment worse than the torment of Sodom and Gomorrah. My exhortation unto you, is, live not a moment longer in that condition, which is so dangerous. Death, hell and damnation will be upon you: and all the world, nay all the angels in heaven, cannot save you from it, while living in that condition.—Therefore without delay flee out of it into Jesus Christ: rest not a moment longer; for if ye die in that condition, all the world cannot save you from hell and destruction. A

2. Sort of folk here, as I suppose, are, they that have had some resolutions, and have been half persuaded to reform their ways: they have been almost persuaded to be Christians, but never altogether persuaded. Ye have never made your point good; but are just where ye were. Well, the thing I would say unto you, is, either make thorough work; be thorough in the business, and be persuaded; otherwise persuade yourselves, and I, in the name of the Lord, persuade you, that it shall make your case worse, and less hopeful than the case of Pagans. A

3. Sort of folk that I would speak to, is, to these who were once zealous and forward in religion; but now they are turned cold, and fallen from their first love. A word to you that once appeared hot and zealous for God, and are now turned key cold. Consider your ways before it be too late; for if ye give way unto such backsliding courses, your case may at length become desperate on your hand.—Therefore, what I would say unto you,

is,

is, Remember from whence thou art fallen, repent, and do thy first works. A

4. Sort is, a company of poor murmuring people. They are still entertaining hard thoughts of God. What I have to say them, is, have better thoughts of God; or assure yourselves he will make something fall in your way, that will make you have better or worse thoughts of him. And

Lastly, I shall say this one word to those that are really godly: fight it out, Sirs.—Run the Christian race set before you; run, and run with patience: ye will come to the end of it shortly. Be faithful unto him that hath called you. Let not the world, nor your own corrupt hearts make you flinch from it. And I shall give you some motives to press you to stedfastness and constancy in your Christian course. And

1st, Hold on, for it has four properties that no other way has in it. And

1. It is a pleasant way. All wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. And

2. This of all other ways is the only sure and safe way.

3. Hold on; for it is an honourable way; and much credit and dignity will follow on it. It is the most creditable way that ever ye went in, and so you shall find it. And

Lastly, It is a blessed way. It has the blessing appended to it. It has the promise both of this life, and of that which is to come; and happy is the man that walks in it. Says the Psalmist, *Blessed is every one that fears the Lord, and walketh in his way.*

2^{dly}, Hold on your way, believers: faint not, for it is the way that all the worthies have gone in, that have gone before you. The whole sufferers and cloud of witnesses for Christ that are now triumphing in heaven have gone in that way before you; and they are all landed safe on the confines of Immanuel's land, and so freed from all their difficulties; for it is a safe way.—Indeed, it is like, ye will also meet with opposition and crosses in that way; but blessed is the man that wrestles and runs it out. And blessed is he that endures unto the end, the same shall be saved.—Now the Lord himself periuade you unto this. So let us pray.

T W O

S E R M O N S

Preached in the Parish of KILBRIDE, by MR.
JOHN BLACKADDER, Sept. 5, 1675.

S E R M O N VI.

ISAIAH liii. II.

He shall see of the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied.

[FORENOON'S SERMON.]

NOW, Sirs, have ye faith amongst you to believe the faithful and true saying of God? I'll tell you good news, Sirs, that I am sure shall make your hearts glad, if ye believe: but if ye believe not the promises, we promise you no good. I'll tell you good news; the ancient decrees of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, shall take effect to all the intents and purposes he has purposed in himself, according to his manifold wisdom, from all eternity; and particularly that great design of God that he has purposed in himself for the redemption of lost sinners, shall be accomplished.—Never a soul that he hath undertaken for to the Father, but shall be brought in to believe; never a privilege that he has purchased for them, but they shall obtain the possession of it.—I know there are some of you that concern yourselves about the way of God: and its likely ye have your own fears this day. I would ye had more fears than you have; fear for sinning, fear for the anger

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ger of God. If ye had these two fears, I would let you keep them : but I am apprehensive, ye have some fears in your hearts that have some honesty in them ; fears for the enemies of this generation, their wiles and malicious devices that they constantly practise against the gospel, and the preaching of it : ye are afraid, that they may frustrate Christ's success therein. Truly if ye had no more but what is visible, I would fear your fear in that too. But, blessed be the Lord, we have an unmovable foundation to ground us against these fears. Whatever ye fear, ye need not fear this ; that our blessed Lord Jesus will be obstructed in any part of success he has designed unto himself : But in spite of all that hell or men on earth can devise, (and that is no small despite) ye may say, that he shall carry on his work of the gospel, until he has accomplished all that his soul has travelled for.— Therefore, for renewing of the impressions of our Lord's sufferings in Scotland, both in that and this place, which I fear may be forgotten by believers long since ; to renew the impression of which, and to establish your hearts that are trembling for this gospel, lest it be marred, and our Lord Jesus be retarded in his success, I have read these words ; in which we have an assurance from God that our blessed Lord *shall see the travel of his soul, and be satisfied* : and though all his enemies set their feet to it, they shall not be able to hinder it.

In the beginning of this chapter to the 10th verse, we have our Lord's sufferings pointed forth, both what his sufferings were, what was the cause, and who was the party he had to do with, which was God the Father ; and *upon him were laid the iniquities of us all*.— Here Isaiah points out his sufferings, as if he had seen them. Some divines call him the evangelical prophet, prophesying of Christ's sufferings as if they had been done already. Unto the 10th verse, and from that to the end, we have the success, fruit or product of his sufferings, and the victory and conquest he obtained thereby. It is said in the end of the 10th verse,—*he shall see his seed : he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand*. Whatever opposition he shall meet with in discharging the pleasure of his Father ; it shall all prosper in his hand.

And here in the words, we have, in the first clause of the verse, an assurance that our Lord Jesus shall have

an accomplishment of all his fruit and travel ; *for he shall see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied.*

Secondly, Ye have the manner how this accomplishment shall be brought about as to particular believers that shall be justified ; and that is by the faith of Jesus Christ. This is one promise ;—*by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.*—They shall be justified ; *by his knowledge*, or the acknowledging of him by faith, *shall he justify many* ; not all, but many, *i. e.* all that acknowledge him to be the Saviour, and their Saviour, and close with him by faith ; and the confirmation of all is given in the close of the verse, *for he shall bear their iniquities.*—Now, we shall take up that part of the verse we have read in these three things following.

1. A short repetition of all the sufferings that our Lord suffered before mentioned that he was to suffer, —*he shall see the travel of his soul* ; which says his soul did travel. And

(1.) It is called soul-travel, not excluding bodily sufferings, but including them ; but it is called soul-travel by a figure, wherein the more excellent or noble part is put for the whole ; the travel of the soul including the body : and so it is called the travel of the soul.

(2.) It is called so, in respect that the soul of Christ did suffer more, and more grievously, being more capable of suffering the wrath of God than the body was : his greatest sufferings were in his soul, as the words here signify.

2. The second thing we have in the words, is, the assurance that our Lord shall obtain the fruit of his soul's travel : it is here called the travel of his soul by another figure, wherein the procuring cause is put for the effect, *he shall see the travel of his soul* and the fruit of his pain ; he shall see all he fulfilled and accomplished, that he travelled and laboured, or was at pains for ; and therefore he shall see the travel of it. A

3. Thing ye have in the words, is, the result of the accomplishment of his soul's travel : the fruit of it shall be to his soul's satisfaction, *he shall be satisfied.* He shall see it accomplished so fully, exactly and sufficiently, that he shall want nothing he travelled for. He shall have full satisfaction, and thanks be to God, that it is according to his measure, and not according to our narrow satisfaction that we might have had. We would have been

been satisfied with less ; but it will be accomplished according to our Lord's souls desire ; and he shall be well-pleased with it, he shall have great complacency in it ; and it shall be the joy of his soul, and the rejoicing of his heart. When he shall see all the different pieces of the fruit that his soul travelled for, and bought so dear, he shall have great pleasure and delight in them.

But I shall not stop longer on the words, nor in deducing doctrines from them : what we shall notice from the text itself, shall be in these doctrines following.

DOCT. 1. *IT is a truth, that our Lord Jesus Christ did endure a sore soul's travel for the sins of his people.*

And hence notice, that if this is the way, Our Lord Jesus Christ had a soul. A certain kind of heretics denied, that he had a soul, maintaining that he had the deity joined—unto his body, whereby they made him a mock man only *. But if he had not a complete person, soul and body, joined to the Godhead, he would be less than half a man. But the scripture shews he was perfectly man, and perfectly God, in two distinct natures, but one person, having both soul and body : *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren. &c.*

And further notice, that his sufferings behoved to be in his soul, as well as in his body. And thanks be to God for it : and good reason that his soul suffered, since he condescended to become the surety or cautioner for our souls. The soul is the chief sinner ; all the sins our bodies act, are from the corruptions of our filthy souls. Therefore our Lord's sufferings behoved to be in his soul ; because the soul is the fountain from whence all corruptions come : sin springs from within the heart. It is that which proceeds from within the man, says our Lord, that defiles the man. All the actions of the body are by nature filthy and unclean, but all uncleanness arises from

† Perhaps he means the ancient heretics who maintained Christ only assumed man's body, but not his soul ; or the Apollinarians who, though they granted that he assumed man's body and a sensitive soul ; yet he had not the reasonable or intellectual soul of man : or that branch of the Arian heresy which held that Christ's divinity supplied the place of his human soul. See these errors in Socrates' and Rose's history of all religions, P. 205, &c.

from the soul or heart. Well, our Lord suffered in his soul, for that we sinned in our souls. But I speak of the travel of Christ's soul; and it is long since ye heard of this; but it is longer since he underwent this fore travel of soul; and I am afraid lest it be forgotten. But it shall not be forgotten; for there shall be a remembrance of his death untill he come again unto judgment, and appear in the sight of all. Alas, I fear, the impression of it be much worn off your spirits this day. The day has been that the soul sufferings of Christ would have been a doctrine that would have been heard with pleasure; when exercises of conscience was among believers about sin, and the wrath of God for sin. We cannot tell what is in this; but we shall speak a word to it now, when the devil and his emissaries are doing all they can to cast down the soul sufferings of Christ*, and to add more suffering unto him in his mystical members. But first, let me premise before I say any more on the subject, that Christ's sufferings were such as never man suffered the like of, nor is ever mere man possibly able to suffer the like again, yea, the soul sufferings of Christ are beyond all that preachers can express. The evangelist gives a hint of it. But in its fulness, it cannot be described at all, unless ye could tell us, what is the weight of the infinite justice of God. But I shall point out somewhat of it in a few particulars.

1. He suffered in his soul; as the travel of his soul had a conjunction and union with his body, so it became a partaker of all his bodily sufferings by sympathy. And

(1.) In respect that his soul travelled by being confined within a mortal body of clay. Well, says the apostle, when speaking of the soul,—*for we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, &c.* And far more reason had Christ to say so, dwelling in a tabernacle of clay. But

(2.) His soul suffered in all his sinless human infirmities by reason of the union, and sympathy arising therefrom. His soul travelled in all these pieces of human frailty:

* How applicable is this to the Arminian and Socinian teachers in this day, who, though they have not the confidence to assert Christ a meer man only; yet do so explain away the merit and efficacious virtue of his blood and sufferings, as to leave him no more preeminence than an inferior deity, a very good man, or an illustrious martyr now glorified.

frailty : he had communication with us in weakness of body, hunger, thirst, weariness, &c. All these affected his soul ; his soul travelled by sympathy in all these outward miseries ; he himself bare our infirmities :—for *we have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*, Heb. iv. 15. And

(3.) His soul suffered also in all the persecutions he met with upon his body ; inflicted upon his body by divine appointment in all his huntings and chassings from place to place, buffeting, and reproaches that were cast upon him.—His soul suffered also in all the torture and pains inflicted upon him by tormenting his naked body with a crown of thorns and nails on the cross ; besides smiting with rods, plucking off the hair, spitting on his blessed face, piercing his side, hands and feet, till blood and water came out, in all these his soul suffered in sympathy with his body : and we may also observe, that they were more immediately the sufferings of the soul, wherewith the body had a sympathy and did suffer, and was affected with oftines (when no outward insolence was offered) by being under a time of absence from his Father's house, and distant from the immediate fruition of his Father and his God in glory ; that is a soul travel even in a believer, 2 Cor. v. 6. *While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord*. As to that immediate enjoyment of him in his soul in glory, this was a soul travel to Christ to be so long away from his Father's house.

2. His soul travelled by many assaults and soul temptations from the devil. This was a travel of soul to Christ, and one of his last steps of humiliation, that he stooped so low as to be buffeted and assaulted by the soul spirit ; and that by horrid temptations. Though there was nothing in him the enemy had to work upon that was capable of assenting or consenting to any temptation ; yet it was a sore soul-travel unto him to be assaulted so with these, as is clear from Mat. iv. and Luke iv.—*Fall down (says the devil) and worship me*. I defy one to be tempted with a more ugly temptation than this and this was not at one time only : it is hinted, Luke iv.

13. *That when the devil had ended all these temptations, he departed from him for a season*, implying he met with new assaults, and like enough, as he had a holy sinless reluctancy in his flesh ;—his nature had an abhorrence of

these: and likely enough, the devil's tempting him was to make him relinquish the work he had to do. A

3. Thing his soul had to travel with, was the weight of all the sins and abominable transgressions of the elect upon him, with all their aggravations. In the former words of the chapter, it is said,—*The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*—Our Lord took upon him this heavy load to press down his soul. He charges himself with all their sins; and it was but righteous with God to charge him with all. He stood under the guilt of your sin and mine before and after conversion, with all their aggravations against light, love, and convictions. O the heavy weight and soul travel he was under!—God abhors nothing but sin: he has a love to all his creatures, but his soul hates the monstrous sin: for the holy God to bear such a weight of that which alone is loathsome to him, that was a sore soul travel indeed. He laid upon him the iniquities of us all. However, it was well upon his back, to what it would have been upon ours: for when all is done, he had that weight upon him, that would have sunk down all the elect (yea the whole race of Adam) unto the bottomless pit for ever and for ever more. A

4. Thing his soul travelled with, was, the curse of God's law; the satisfaction of a broken covenant of works lying upon the elect for all their transgressions of God's holy law; a curse for every sin with its aggravations: as many sins as many curses: our sins are gone up above our heads more than we can number; so as many curses lay upon the head of our Lord Jesus. Every one of the elect's sins lay upon him, and his soul travelled under them all, Gal. iii. 10. *Whoever is under the works of the law, is under the curse; for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them.*—The law lays abundance of duties upon thee; and then the curse is upon thee, if thou do them not perfectly, constantly, and without halt, all the days of thy life: He had all these curses to lie under. So we have it in that 13. verse,—*Jesus Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law: and how was that? Was it by a word of intercession with the Father? No it was by taking the curse on himself; by being made a curse for us.* O good news, that the blessing of Abraham might come on them that believe! a brave exchange! he takes all your curses upon him,

him, and gives us all the blessings that he purchased for us. A

5. Thing that our Lord travelled under, was the tormenting pains of the fiery scorching wrath of an offended God. What pains do you imagine the infinite and spotless holy law, and the justice of God exact and require of a law condemned sinner? even as much torture and extremity of sorrow and pain as infinite justice can devise. It is said,—*ear hath not heard, nor eye seen, what is laid up for them that love him.* So the like pains are reserved for the ungodly in hell: all these pains he endured in his soul. Ye know not, ye know not what soul torment is: many would flee from it, if they could get rid of it: but they cannot. But he had all this to endure, that made the poor frail body cry out with tears, *Who knows the power of his wrath?* Ask all the angels in heaven, they cannot tell you: ask all the devils in hell that have had some proof of it these more than five thousand years, they cannot tell you: but ask our Lord, he knows the power of the Father's wrath: it was such a power of torment, that if all the angels in heaven, and all the men upon earth had been in his one body, they would all have succumbed, perished, and quitted the work with shame.—But he, and he alone, stood under the wrath of God the Father; because the person suffering was God: God was with, and in him: he was in his person *reconciling the world unto himself.* Without his own soul suffering, all had been lost and gone together. A

6. Soul's travel he endured, was, the *contradiction of sinners against himself*, Heb. xii. 3. It was not only his body, but even his soul suffered under the contradiction of sinners; and that in different respects.

(1.) Under their unbelief. They would not believe him when he had been preaching all the day unto them: that was a contradiction. *He was grieved for the hardness of their hearts*, that they would not believe the gospel: and so his soul suffered upon this account.

(2.) He met with contradictions by their frequent essays to dispute him out of the great doctrines of the gospel and man's salvation. When he had preached these up all day, they offered to preach them all down again: this was a contradiction of sinners. And

(3.) His soul suffered in all their reproaches cast upon him, calling him a glutton, a drunkard, a wine-bibber,

a friend of publicans and sinners : nay, a devil and the worst of devils : this was a sore soul-travel and grief unto him. It is said of him, *Pfal. lxxix. 20. Reproach hath broken my heart.* He that was holy, harmless and undefiled, to be called a vile sinner ; and a companion of notorious sinners. He suffered the taunting, the mocking, pointing with the finger, wagging of the head, clapping of the hands : he was thus the object of all their ridicule ; and this affected his soul also.

(4.) He suffered by their blasphemous mouths, even in the greatest agonies of his suffering, when hanging on the cross. They then said, *If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe on him.*—He said, *he trusted in God : let him deliver him now.* All this he likewise suffered.

(5.) He suffered contradictions even from his own friends and disciples, by their unbelief. They could not cast the devil out of the poor child.—*How long shall I suffer you ? bring him unto me.* This also appeared in his many exhortations with them : *O ye of little faith* : and it also sometimes made him sigh and groan in spirit, when he saw their unbelief. When he came to raise Lazarus, he heard them saying, *Could not he that opened the eyes of the blind, have hindered this man to have died ?* they gave all over for hopeless ; while he is advancing and going on to the work, they are still quarreling with him : and he gets another grief from Martha, who said,—*Lord, by this time he stinketh.* This was a new grief : but he got above all this : *Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God ?* A

7. Soul-travel he was under, was, the desertion and deprivation of the light of God's countenance and favour. Never a soul travelled under such a measure of this : the want of the light of his Father's countenance, was indeed a sore soul-travel unto him.—All the desertions believers meet with, are but partial eclipses ; but this was a total eclipse : no spark of light, not a blink of his Father's favour here, when he had most need of it, and most ado with it : not the least blink of his Father's countenance for his consolation ; nothing but a conflict with pure justice, exact and sore justice ; so that he cries out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?* And it was no matter of moon-shine that made him

him cry out before so many witnesses. I warrant some would have stumbled at this : But stumble as they will, he would have it made manifest for our eternal consolation ; and to let us all know that there was not one penny of any believer's debt unpaid : nay, until he had paid the utmost farthing, no favour could he have ; so that he cried, O my Father, *why hast thou forsaken me ?* Yet thou art my God : I hold thee by faith, although I am made to grapple with strict, pure and severe justice. And

Lastly, Our Lord travelled under extreme sorrow and grief : sometimes he was so racked with holy sorrow, that he was scarcely able to subsist or hold out a moment longer.—*My soul*, says he, *is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* O sorrowful sorrow ! *He was a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief*, Isa. liii. 3. Sometimes he was put to an extremity of horror : *the sorrows of death and hell compassed me about* ; and many times these his holy fears proved, as it were, distracting ; so that many times he was put to prayer and supplication with strong cries and tears for fear of the awful wrath of an offended God ; and sometimes his affections have been so exercised and commoved without any outward disturbance, that they brought on him, as it were, a holy damp of soul : so that while speaking unto his disciples, he is seized with such terror and amazement, that he is made to say, John xii. 27, *Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ?* So that you and I need not be ashamed to be put to a non-plus, when it fared so with him. It is true, he was not long at that with it ; for he immediately cries out, *Father, glorify thy name.*

Now, Sirs, wherefore was all this ? Sure it was not for his own sake : and the Lord never inflicted any punishment upon any creature but for some certain cause : now, what was the reason or cause his soul was at all this travel ? It was

1. Because the elect had transgressed God's law ; and so were at variance with him, and he with them. They had lost themselves by sin and transgression : so necessity laid that on Christ, because he was become their surety ; and so it behoved him to pay this debt for them : and here was the necessity of his soul-travel.—*He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.* And so being our surety or cautioner

tioner, it behoved him to take all our debt upon him. And

2. He had this soul's travel, that he might make amends to offended justice, and reconcile God and sinners, and bring them into peace with him. *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*: a strange word indeed! what meant all this soul-travel? Why, it was just God making amends, so to speak, or satisfying himself.—*The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.*

3. This behoved to be the way, or else no other way could make it: angels and men could not find it; yea, God himself, consistently with his honour, could not find out another way. All that he devised in his ordinance of typical sacrifices, purged sin, but not properly, Heb. x. 4, 5. *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.*—*Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not.* And what then? *Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.* There is no other way of reconciliation. Our head was on the block: justice had drawn the sword: then he steps in, and says, *Lo, I come.* O there is a seasonable Saviour, who in due time says, *Lo I come!* But woe worth us for the bad requital we have made him for all this.

4. Another necessity laid upon him, was, sovereign love: and to give vent to this, sinners must be made clean, and the enmity must be done away. Love must be at them; and therefore love travelled a soul's travel, to have the beloved saved: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.* Who can express this love! *He loved us, and washed us in his own blood.* What made him stoop so low as to take his own blood? Because he loved us, therefore he washed us in his own blood. Says the apostle, Gal. ii. 20.—*The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* All this proceeded from love: love made our Lord do this, when no other bond could bind him, either from God or the creature, nothing but the love that God bare to sinners.

Now, I come unto a short word of *application.*

USE 1. What say ye unto it, when we are speaking of Christ's soul's travel? (which, alas! we can give but a poor narrow hint of). Will ye make it your study
more

more and more to search, and know more of the soul's sufferings of our Lord Jesus? what say ye unto the sufferings of our Lord, that he suffered in his soul? and what think ye of them? all the angels in heaven are looking into this mystery, *God manifested in the flesh*; God-man suffering in our nature to reconcile sinners unto himself: they look and wonder; and they can never come at the bottom of it. Strange mystery! a world's wonder! O Sirs, what think ye of it, that the soul of him that was God, was thus put to travel for your sins? what think ye of it, O west country, and parish of Kilbride, before whom Christ crucified has been evidently set forth, many a-day, before you in the gospel, and inculcated upon you? what say ye to it, that have this day heard a short repetition of Christ's soul's travel, and some of the fruits of it? what think ye of it? But, alas, woës me, I am afraid that all is wrong with many of you: I fear, we may say to many in Scotland, and to many of you, what the apostle said unto the unbelieving Jews at Antioch, Acts xiii. who, when he had been setting forth the sufferings of Christ, and the fruits of them, offering Christ unto them, and through him the forgiveness of sin, he comes in the 40th verse, to give them this caveat.—*Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, that is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.* The Lord forbid, that we should have this to apply unto you.—Behold a crucified Christ, a soul-travelling Redeemer: behold him bleeding in his love-wounds, and scorched before the fire of divine justice: behold him bleeding on the cross: behold him dead and buried: behold him in all his soul's travel; and wonder and perish. Why?

1st, Because they are despisers of all his sufferings. I charge many in Scotland, and some of you that are here this day, for being despisers of this precious soul-doctrine. Who are despisers of the soul-sufferings of Christ? even unbelievers. O despisers of the soul-sufferings of Christ, Behold, I work a work of wonder, *and a thing marvellous in your eyes, which tho' a man tell you, ye will not believe.*—Behold ye, wonder and perish: ye shall see and hear Christ crucified, and make a wonder of it; and ye shall perish, if ye believe not. And

2^{dly}, They that believe the doctrine of it, that such a thing was true, but never sat down seriously to lend a look unto all the soul-sufferings of Christ. Think ye that

that the soul's sufferings of Christ are of no value, that ye never sat down seriously to take a look of all the pains he has been at, and all he has done and suffered ?

3dly, They are despisers and wonderers that make a mock or jest of sin. There are some that think it a sport to do evil. How many such sports are there now a-days ? Many when they have sinned, while they are able, by idle jesting, blaspheming God's name, piercing and cutting his work, they will just make a gaff of laughter of it. Do ye make a sport of sin, which cost our Lord so much soul-travel ? So ye despise, *wonder and perish*. These ranters that make a sport of sin, are despisers indeed.

4thly, They are despisers that never felt the grievousness of sin before God ; that were never under soul's wants by sin, convictions or challenges of consciences. These folk who never have found the weight of sin, are despisers of our Lord's sufferings ; for they think them all needless. The man that has a silent conscience, that weights him not because of sin ; that man is a despiser ; for he thinks that all which Christ endured was needless, because he has a light burden of it. And

5thly, They are despisers, that from the weight of sin were never urged to flee in unto the blood of Jesus Christ for washing and cleansing : they are all despisers that were never thus urged to come and close with Christ. Thou sayest all this was in vain that he suffered, because thou wilt not make use of it all : these soul-sufferings of Christ are not of thy soul's concernment, while in this condition. And

6thly, A sixth sort of despisers in this generation, are the persecutors of Christ, of his gospel and ordinances ; to whom we may say, *Behold, ye despisers, wonder and perish*. We fear, that come on them : for persecutors are despisers of the sufferings of Christ in these two respects following :

1. They interdict and forbid the ministers of Christ to publish the doctrine of his soul's sufferings : they are not discharged to preach against Popery and Prelacy only ; but simply discharged to preach at all, that is to say, ye shall make no mention of Christ, or his soul's sufferings either.—That is a great discharge of our Lord's soul-travel ; yet they will not so much as hear of it.—
And

2. They

2. They are despisers by obstructing, what in them lies, the gathering in of the fruit of our Lord's soul-travel up and down the land at this day.—What is our Lord doing by his gospel? We have our record in heaven this day, that this is our great errand amongst you, to gather in the travel of his soul; to see where there is any of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to get a gripe of them; to get poor bankrupt sinners who are bound captives to sin and Satan, and have nothing to pay their debt, brought in to the Saviour, and set free: and it is the enemies design this day to obstruct this. But it is above their hand to hinder it, though they are despisers. So they add more to what they have already done; they are adding more soul-sufferings to Christ; for he has a sympathy with his mystical body the church: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* O despisers, wonder and perish, ye that slight all that Christ's soul hath endured already; and not only so, but they must add afflictions to the afflicted, and persecute him in his members, whose soul suffered before: and they will bear him down in the extent of his merit also. O despisers, we are afraid ye be men that *behold, wonder and perish.*

USE 2. And it is a word to you, believers in Christ, that have already closed with him, and accepted of his soul's sufferings. And

1. Have still this great love of God manifested in the soul's sufferings of Christ in view, and wonder and admire at it. Here is a wonder! *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* and has laid all this suffering on his own son for your sake, and he was content to undergo all this soul-travel for you, believers, that have fled into him. The poor, base, self-judged and self-condemned sinner, that had nothing to bring to him; but was only living; and if he had thrust thee away, thou must be yet upon him. Though he had endured all this soul's travel; take a new look of the mysteries of the love of God in all these pieces of soul-travel drawn in such great characters that he *that runs may read it.* Behold what manner of love is this, that the soul of his beloved Son should be so pressed under your sins, O believers! And

2. O believers, it is your duty to hate sin, and all sin. *Hate ill, all ye that love the Lord:* hate your own sins more than any sins. Your sin is most hateful unto the

justice of God, and even beyond the sins of reprobates : for it has this to aggravate it, that reprobates sins have wronged the justice or law of God ; but thou hast wronged the innocent and harmless Lamb of God. O how lothsome should your sins be, that have burthened him thus. It was thy sins, O believer, that made him suffer all this in thy soul's stead : it was your sins that brought all the temptations, all the heavy curses of God's holy law, and caused him to be made as it were an execration by his dear Father ; and that not for his own, but for your own sins. It was thy sins, O believer, that made him endure that intolerable pain and wrath of God, which made him cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?* I say, and charge it home upon thee, that it was thy sins that made him suffer all this sore soul's travel.—It was thy sins that made the Son of God to travel under all this soul's sorrow, and all the terrors that first made thee to flee in to him. Thus should you mourn ; for gospel-mourning is to look upon the face of your sins, and be grieved.

3. If any of you has a sore fit of soul-exercise, (alas ! that there is so little soul-exercise amongst you) think not much of that. You have but sparks in your way : there is a vast difference betwixt your soul-exercise and the soul-travel of Christ. His was for satisfaction ; but yours at the worst is but a fatherly rebuke to the child of God ; but his was a severe rebuke of the wrath of God, until he fulfilled the utmost mite unto strict justice.—Therefore, take it in good part, you who have such exercise ; for his soul travelled to satisfy for all these. A

4. Word to believers, is, let all this soul-travel draw out your love unto him. Is there one spark of love within you ? or is it dead and cold for all that has been said of this soul-travel of his ? Let this draw out the love of your hearts, and not of your words only unto him : give away your hearts unto him. Away with these harlot-lovers : he has loved us with such love as made him endure all this soul-travel. Let this curse all your idols to the door with an oath of abjuration.—*What have I to do any more with idols ?* Take a look of Christ's soul's travel, and let him have his room.—Love him not in words only, but in your hearts and practice. There are many profess they love our Lord Jesus Christ : they love his cause, his word. They love the bible and a good preaching :

preaching : they profess much love to him with their mouths ; but their practice and deeds set forth the hatred of their hearts.—It is love in the heart that makes one suffer for him ; and the consideration of his soul's suffering for you should draw forth your love to suffer for him, and to difference your sufferings and his soul-travel.

(1.) He suffered for you before ye had a capacity to suffer for him : and all that ye suffer, is but in gratitude to him for what he suffered. Do then what ye can in cleaving to truth, to suffer for him.

(2.) His soul's travel was his humiliation and abasement ; but your suffering for him is your exaltation and advancement.—His soul's suffering was for thy soul's filthiness sake ; but thy sufferings for him is for his excellency's sake.—His suffering was his abasement ; but thy suffering for him is thy honour. O that this generation cannot be brought to suffer for him who endured such soul suffering for sin.

USE 3. Let this doctrine encourage ministers to preach up the soul-sufferings of Christ ; and for the people that hear this doctrine, let it encourage you to hear upon all hazards. There is great hazard indeed, now to publish the soul-sufferings of Christ ; but this should animate us to go over the belly of all opposition : he endured soul-travel in the greatest of perils : but we do it upon the hazard of the wrath of man only.

The last case (and I have done) is unto those that are yet living in their sins. A word unto you, sinners, that are out of Christ, and yet slaves unto your lusts. It is a day of Christ's good-will to Scotland : good news to you, poor strangers, sinners,—the best news that ever ye heard, that Jesus Christ was put to such sore soul-travel for reconciling sinners unto God!—But you'll say, Alas, minister, what of that : I know and have heard of that ; but that is for the saints, friends and followers of God, or godly folk.—But, graceless person, who art yet lying in enmity against God, what wilt thou say, if thou shalt find it in scripture, that all this his soul's travel was for enemies, and them that are ungodly : and wilt thou add a column to it ? and we shall prove that thou must do so, if thou wert the most debauched sinner in all Scotland, (and there are as debauched sinners in it, as in all the world). What wouldst thou say, if thou shalt find thy name engraven upon the soul-suffer-

ings of Christ? read Rom. v. 6. *For when we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly.* He died not for saints or friends; but for ungodly persons like unto thee, and even for enemies, as in the 10th verse:—*when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* Now enemy and sinner, what sayest thou to that? Canst thou lay any claim to it? or hast thou any use for the soul-sufferings of Christ? for it was for such sinners as thou art.—But I tell thee better news yet, if better news can be told thee: there is authority given from the great master, whose soul travelled all this travel, unto his lawful and sent servants, to treat with ungodly sinners upon the satisfaction of his soul's travel: *to us is committed the word of reconciliation*:—and says the same apostle, 2 Cor. i. 20. *We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God.* And we have a warrant and unquestionable foundation of assurance that backs our request, that it shall be made out, *For he shall see the travel of his soul, and be satisfied a for he hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him,* 2 Cor. v. 21. And what sayest thou to that? Come then, graceless and godless sinner, and once more be invited to come to Christ, before ye hear that dreadful sound,—*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*—Come then, and partake of the soul-sufferings of Christ: And we obtest and charge you, before the great Judge of the quick and the dead, and by all the torments of hell, and all the joys of heaven and earth, and by that precious immortal soul of yours, that, be what ye will, ye come in now, and have a share of the soul-travel of Christ. Is thy name, sin? then he was made sin. Is it abominable, destitute of righteousness, yea sin, and all sin? then he was made sin in the abstract for us, *that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*—Come then, and confess your sins: *only acknowledge thine iniquities,* and that thou hast walked contrary to him. Humble yourselves: take with your libel, even all the curses and condemnation of the law, and bring your bill, and put it into Christ's hand, and tell him you are not able to pay it, and see what ye can make of it by the travel of his soul. He can cancel all in the sight of God his Father; only confess your faults; take with the charge, and break off your sins by repentance. Cast
down

down your weapons of sin, and let them be no more ; let him that is filthy, be filthy no more : lay down your weapons, if ye would share of the foul-travel of Christ. Come away, says the Spirit of God, *fury is not in me ; let him make peace with me, and he shall have peace with me.* The Lord himself make a bargain of it. AMEN.

S E R M O N VII.

ISAIAH liii. 11.

He shall see of the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied.

[AFTERNOON'S SERMON.]

THERE is two great BE's that we have read unto you, and they are peremptory truths spoken by him who only can say, *shall be*, the sovereign God, who works, and who can hinder ? He has said, *He shall see of the travel of his soul, and he shall be satisfied.* We told you in the forenoon, that Christ travelled for redeeming lost sinners ; it was not for nought ; but it was a great business in the sight of God, and it should be a business of great value in yours also. It was a business of great price in the sight of God, the saving of souls. It was for this he travelled.—We told you last, that it was for ungodly sinners, debauched sinners, and the chief of sinners : we asked again and again, if ye had any use or need of this travel ; and we shall ask it as long as there is any ungodly sinner out of hell, when the everlasting gospel is preached. But we know not how long our time and yours shall be together. We speak also of what improvement ye should make of this soul-travel : and O strange ! strange ! that we should have to put you again in mind, and that the sense of need puts you not in mind of it. In all this it was true, that for wicked and ungodly sinners he died ; for the ungodly to make them godly ; and he died for enemies, to make them friends. But it is a certain truth, that he died for them while they were enemies. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,
David,

David, &c. yea, all the chief of the saints that are now in heaven, what were they once but ungodly men?—Christ died for these, while ungodly; even as ungodly some of them as you and I am.—He had not another sort to die for but enemies and ungodly sinners: and he had no call to have died, had they not been so.—Therefore again and again, I tell you these good news, even all you ungodly sinners that are in the land of the living and out of hell; Christ's soul travelled for enemies and ungodly men such as you and I am: May ye not then come, and get a share of it imputed unto you for righteousness? and you *stout-hearted* sinners, *that are far from righteousness*, what will ye do? will ye protract time, *until the times be changed*? it may be, it will never be put in the mouth of a messenger of God, to come so near hand with an offer of peace unto you again. What shift will ye make in a little? Ye will not have the opportunity every day to come to a moor-side to hear the joyful sound: O then, for a touch of this soul-travel of Christ to reconcile you unto God. Take it in time, so long as ye may have it. I'll tell what many a soul, once in Britain and Ireland, now in hell, is crying, "We once heard the fame of the gospel, and woe us, that we slighted the call and cry of ministers, praying us to be *reconciled unto God*."—Then shall answer the reflex sound in the conscience for all the preaching-days, fast-days, and great communion-days; all these shall sound again in the conscience; that shall be more dreadful than the shrieks of devils. "I heard of the fame of the soul-travel of Christ; but I cared nothing for it. Then woe me, that I hated instruction, and despised the voice of my teachers." All this, and more will be your cry then, believe it, if ye hearken not in time.

There is no more ado now, but to lay down your weapons of rebellion, and accept of the free offer of Christ, and that without money and without price. Only be sensible of want, misery and unworthiness; and be willing, O debauched sinner, thou that hast been so willing to sin, wilt thou but be heartily willing to be saved, and take this soul-travel of Christ, this day? Here it is offered, and it is like it is for thy sake that this text of scripture is preached this day. Wilt thou not be persuaded? or is the pleasure of sin so sweet, that thou wilt sit the invitation a quarter of an hour? Ye know

not but he may take back his word, and clap a righteous curse of hardness upon your hearts ; or the devil shall cast in some impediment or other in your way, in the application of this soul-travel of Christ. We are aiming to have some ungodly sinner made godly, and some enemy reconciled unto God this day ; and we wot not what will become of it. O that there might be a bargain of it amongst you this day, when Christ is offered to you.. Well, Sirs, *He shall see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied.*—Good news as ever ye heard : he travelled to the full, and finished the journey, and brought forth the great birth of salvation to purpose, and that unto every elect sinner unto the end of the world. Peace with God, and pardon of all transgressions are for them wrought out by this soul-travel of Christ.—But we have better news to tell you yet, and that is, Christ shall see the travel of his soul made out unto himself : he shall be a living witness to see all the travel of his soul, recompenced ; this lies not on your, or mine, or the church's care. O Sirs, if it did so, we would not take meikle pains of it in gathering in his soul's travel. But he himself shall see it done.—The second doctrinal point is,

DOCT. 2. *That all that our Lord Jesus Christ travelled for, he shall see fully made out unto him.*

In speaking unto which, I shall endeavour,

- I. To shew what he shall see made out by the travel of his soul. And
- II. Give some grounds of assurance, that he shall see this travel of his soul made out unto him.

I. What he shall see made out unto him by the travel of his soul. And

1st, He shall see the fruit of his soul's travel made out with respect unto all and every one of the elect of God ; and that in respect of their number unto one single and individual person, even the meanest and most obscure person of them that ever was born, of all nations and languages. Every one in Scotland, England, Ireland, France, Spain, Germany, &c. where the will of God was revealed, shall be made to sing this song, Rev. v. 9. *through the ages of eternity ;—Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us by thy blood, and hast made us kings and priests*

priests unto God.—It was his Father's will and good pleasure that he should give his life for them ; and he shall get an account of them from the greatest to the least ; even of all that he died for, *they shall be raised up at the last day.* Believers of all sizes in graces, Abraham who was strong in faith, and staggered not at the promise, and these who are so weak in faith, that they have enough ado to hang by a hair, like the poor Publican that stood afar off, or like that man who said, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.* He shall also see the travel of his soul made out upon all sizes of age, old and young, and middle aged men and women, from those that are called early in the morning, unto those that are called in the last hour of the evening.—He shall see the travel of his soul made out from all quarters, and upon all ranks and denominations of men, even some of the mighty, noble and wise according to the flesh ; and though not many of these are called, thanks be to God, that there are some of all ranks of men, that he shall see the travel of his soul made out upon ; though not many of the nobles, great folk, and heads of wits, are saved.—*Ye see your calling, brethren, how not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.*—Yet a few of these shall not be wanting : but Christ shall see the travel of his soul made out from the greatest unto the most despicable and poorest of mankind.

2dly, He shall see the travel of his soul made out in reference unto all that he purchased for them. The

1. Thing he shall see made out unto them, is, justice satisfied, well content, and paid. Poor insolvent debtor who has nothing to pay, he has travelled and paid thy debt, and satisfied for thee. Thou readest thy *items*, and thou thinkest they shall never be paid ; but he has a good while ago done it for thee. It is true, there is no justified person, but he must attain unto true saving faith and evangelical repentance : but it is long since the price was paid ; and many an elect sinner wots not of this ; and though they are not absolutely bound to know it, yet it is laid down, and shall be made application of in due time. A

2. Thing he shall see, is, the poor believer getting his discharge and acquittance subscribed by his own blood.—*For the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin.* It may be thou hast been long seeking an intimation of that ;

that ; and it may be thou hast not yet got it ; but it is long since thou hast heard him say, *Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins are forgiven thee.* It may be, some of you never yet heard him so ; yet the intimation of it is very comfortable : and say it, or not say it, if thou comest in, and takest him by faith, and believest on his name, that *justifieth the ungodly*, he shall see thy acquittance and discharge made sure, and that is enough.—If thou canst say, out of pinching necessity I have fled in and cast myself down at a Saviour's feet, to be made of what he will : I quit all mine own things, and betake myself to his soul's travel and purchase. Come life or death, though I should never get this word of pardon positively intimated unto me all my days, yet I will lean unto my trusty cautioner, that he will make an intimation of my acquittance in his own time. He shall see the discharge given : therefore it is said, whether thou know it or not, —*there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus ; no charge, but all is discharged here.* A

3. Thing he shall see his soul's travel for, is, the bringing elect sinners into a covenant of peace with the Father.—*I will make with them a covenant of peace. I will give him for a covenant*, for a reconciler : he shall see that made out in the covenant, *I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David*, or the son of David ; it was Christ. This was his soul's travel ; and he will have it sealed by a covenant in his own blood ; and the seals of this covenant ye have them, Baptism and the Supper. So our Lord Jesus Christ shall see his purchase sealed. A

4. Thing he shall see as the travel of his soul, is, the gospel preached wherever he has any elect souls to bring in. He shall see all the means of their edification and salvation brought in the way of those that he has travelled for : and ere he want, he will make a travel over the sea to America or Barbadoes : he will venture a sea voyage to fetch in one soul ; he will travel through sea and land ; he will send a minister to travel far off, ere he want one elect soul brought in unto himself. He will send his gospel and means of salvation, if men upon earth and all the devils in hell were standing in brigades to oppose it, Mat. xxiv. 19. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached unto all the world, for a witness unto all nations.* That was a great part of the travel of his soul, to have the gospel-means of salvation preached,—

faith cometh by hearing. They must be brought in to believe, and they must have the ordinary way of believing;—*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the sword of God.* I say, that he shall then see the travel of his soul made out by a preached gospel.

5. He shall also see the success of the gospel, and what way it proves successful, he is the author and finisher of our faith; and as a prince he *gives repentance and remission of sin.* And there is not one elect person, but he shall see these made out unto him. This was insured to our Lord before he actually did suffer, Psal. cx. 3. *The people shall be made willing in a day of thy power:* How came ye to believe? Was it not by virtue of the assurance the Father gave the Son as the purchase of his soul-travel, *thy people shall be made willing?* I shall undertake for that. Away then with that rotten foundation of willingness held by Arminians, of man's free will in Satan's bound prisoner. Here we get our faith, *I will make them willing.* I will make them believe. He shall then see the gospel made effectual in bringing all that the Father hath given the Son to repentance.—*All that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me,* in spite of devils and men's backwardness and unbelief.—
And

6. He shall see himself established in his kingdom: wherefore did he travel and witness a good confession before Pontius Pilate? Was it for a kingdom, and that on earth? Where has he a kingdom? it is not in hell, nor in heaven properly yet; but on earth; for he travelled to have a kingdom there. He is a king, and for *this end he was born,* that he might have a kingdom: altho' this be looked on with disdain by the great folk. But it is another kingdom than the kingdoms of this world; for wherever Christ has a church, there is a kingdom: and where there is a kingdom, there must be a king. We say, he has a kingdom: sometimes one of the kingdoms of the world joins itself unto the church; but he claims not one of them as he does the church, in that 2d Psalm we sung, *I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion.* He must reign, and see all this made out in his soul's travel. He is a king; and therefore a kingdom he must have, for he shall *see the travel of his soul, and be satisfied.* And

Lastly, He shall see the redeemed placed, and put in the full possession of all that is promised in the covenant,
that

that he travelled for, and that they have believed they shall be possessed of. Nay, they shall inherit more than their faith could reach or comprehend. So he shall never cease from his mediatory office, till he see every one of his redeemed put in the possession of all that he travelled for. Says he, John xiv. *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you.—I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, ye may be also.*—I travelled for that purpose, that I might have you brought, where I am. And I can assure you, that he will see all this done and performed; for he will make room for you. He spake very peremptorily to the Father, and was made very welcome by him in all this boldness: for he knew he was heard: and it is a righteous thing with God the Father to let him see the travel of his soul made out. And when taking his farewell of the world, and when as it were making his latter will before men, he says, John xvii. 24. *Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, &c.* I spent myself for this; and my will is, that those that my soul travelled for, *be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

II. Now, would you have any grounds of this assurance that he shall see all this made out unto you? And it is as sure as the word can make it; and all the truths therein are very sure. And, for your further establishment therein, I shall give you some grounds that this assurance goes upon. And

1. We have assurance by his promise. *He shall see the travel of his soul,* says the Spirit of God; and it is he, the Mediator God-man, Christ; that plant of renown, that shall grow before him as a root in a dry place, that has *no form or comeliness, why we should desire him;* and yet the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all: *he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;* and he shall see the travel of his soul in all this, and that is a sure word of promise.

2. It is sure from the decrees of election. They were chosen to life in Christ Jesus; there is predestination that is abstracted from all causes in the creature; and proceeds according to his sovereign will and good pleasure: they are and were sinners, and the Lord well knew them

to be such ; and therefore election looks unto Christ : they were chosen in him before the world began, therefore the travel of his soul must be made out unto them by the decree of God that is without repentance or change. Election is mutable, as damnable heretics say.* But, thanks be to God, *we have not so learned Christ*, but we know that election is an immutable thing, and that the decrees of God are as unchangeable as himself. A

3. Ground of assurance, is, from the covenant of redemption made betwixt the Father and the Son. There is a discovery of that secret : he has revealed that covenant, John vi. 37. He tells them, there was a number given him of the Father, not all. There is a sure connection : I indent for that number : there is the bargain from all eternity ; and by that covenant it shall be made sure, *For all that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me.* They are given me of the Father, and by my soul-travel, I shall redeem them.

2. It is made sure from the worth, merit and value of the person whose soul travelled. It was not a mere man only, but the soul of a person who was God-man. So the worth of the person makes or enhances the merit of his sufferings. The person that suffered is worth heaven and earth, nay, and unspeakably more. It is the worth of God. Therefore he shall surely see his travel ; for it is called the blood of God †. *And the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.* A

5. Ground

• This must be applied to the followers of James Arminius, the first and last articles of whose gloomy fabric, is, that election is mutable, and sometimes conditional, as man by his own free will believes or not : and that believers may finally and totally fall from a state of grace ; and consequently be a saint today, and a reprobate to morrow : which is the native consequence of the preceding : for if all depend upon the improvement of our own free-will, it is but reasonable to allow, that it may mis-give us ; which is contrary to the whole tenor of scripture, particularly this text, — *He shall see the travel of his soul and be satisfied.*

† This doctrine reaches a reproof unto both the Arian and Socinian heresy. The Samosatrenians, Photinians, Ariars, &c. held that Christ was meerly man, and had no being till his incarnation. The ancient Socinians maintained that Christ by his death did not satisfy for us, but only obtained power for us to satisfy for ourselves by our faith and obedience ; that he died for

5. Ground of assurance, is, that the Father hath put all power in his hand: he hath made subject unto him principalities and powers. And what shall hinder him to see his soul-travel made out? Go, poor despised men, and preach, and baptize every creature under heaven. Alas, Lord, shall we, illiterate men, go and preach? Yes, says he, go and preach; for I will see this travel of my soul made out: and why? Because *all power in heaven and in earth is given unto me*: and that is ground of encouragement. He is his Father's only deputy in the world: *The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son*, John v. 22. And the living Father quickens and raises up the dead, even so, *the son quickeneth whom he will*; and he has given him power to make the sufferings of his soul effectual, and to see the fruits of them. A

6. Ground, is, the Father's acceptance of him: I am satisfied: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*. And it is all reason, he see this travel made out unto him.

Lastly, He shall see it made out, because he lives for ever, as an advocate or intercessor with the Father, to see every part and particular of his soul's travel made out to believers. He was once dead, but is now alive, and *Behold, he lives for evermore, Amen; and hath the keys of hell and death*. I must tell you one thing from this, and you will find it a truth, and it is this; That as it is a most wicked work, so it is a fruitless work to essay to stop our Lord in the gathering in of the travel of his soul. Such is the work that all the devils in hell and men upon earth, and all the generation of malignants, all erroneous persons, all flagitious, wicked, profane persons, and all that have not believed the report of the gospel: this is the work they are about; they have risen up in a combination against the Lord and his anointed,

for himself, *i. e.* for the mortality and infirmities of human nature, which he assumed which were sinless. Our present sects Arminians and Socinians teach, that he is inferior to God in point of essence and necessary self-existence, and that as the head and author of the Christian religion, he died only to confirm his doctrine, and leave his followers a pattern of heroic virtue, patience, courage and constancy in suffering. See these errors more fully held out in Eusebius' history, Simpson's ecclesiastical history, Rose's view of all religions, and the appendix to the general history of religion published in the year 1764.

ted, to hinder the gathering in of the travel of his soul. *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?* Their great business is, to hinder Christ from reigning, when his soul travelled for a kingdom: *yet have I set my king upon my holy hill.* Let them consult and concert what they will; it shall be all in vain to the purpose of hindering him from the travel of his soul. Many days and many ways does the devil take to hinder the gathering in of the travel of his soul: for,

First, He detains folk in ignorance; and when he cannot get them kept there, he raises surmises to alienate their hearts from the simplicity or strictness of the gospel, or the cross that oftentimes attends it: and by that means he labours to retard the in-bringing of the travel of Christ's soul: and if that prevails not, he can transform himself into an angel of light.

Again, ere ever ye wot, he will raise up sin, and cause the man to despair. Says he, Is sin so filthy in its nature? then thou canst not presume to come to Christ: nay, thou canst not come unto him without something of thy own to recommend thee, &c. But I'll tell you, it is but a wicked vain work: he shall not get it hindered.

Again, men take ways to get this work hindered: therefore, they hamper or straiten the publication of this soul-travel of Christ: as to many who publish these news, they must banish some of them out of the land, put some of them in prisons, and some of them out of the land of the living.—And if there be any part of the country that Christ is like to get in the travel of his soul by bringing poor sinners to melting of heart and reformation of life, then they send a garrison unto that part of the country to hinder it. But that will also prove a vain and wicked work; but if this makes nothing, but still some man or other is brought through the new birth, then away and persecute that man or woman as a fanatic; because it is the fruit of Christ's travel. But let them dig as deep as they will, they shall neither get their counsel, nor themselves hid from the Lord. And I have a word or two of good news unto you, and disappointment to your enemies. And that by way of application: And,

I. Do not think it shall be in the power of the world, men or devils either, to frustrate our Lord's soul-travel; for he shall not want one elect person, nor shall one of them remain in unbelief; nor one preaching of the gos-

pel shall be hindered; for when they get leave to hinder this, he hath little good to do in that place at that time; yea, it may be that the hindering of the preaching of the word, may make some clap more close to the gospel-offer, when it is to be taken away: do not say that we are now boasting; but I say it in behalf of my glorious master Jesus Christ; he, who is able to work salvation with his own arm, and to see the travel of his soul, and be satisfied: do what they can to hinder it; yet all their opposition shall work for its furtherance: a strange thing! *a seed shall do service unto him, while sun and moon endure.* Says the enemy Pharaoh, we shall bear you all down; we shall make you all slaves, and so work and weary you, that ye shall not multiply or increase; but if that will not do, I will take the male children, and drown them as soon as born: yet all that tended rather to multiply them: *the more they were oppressed, the more they grew.* Strange! that he should multiply them by diminishing them; like Paul, when put in prison for the preaching of the word. Now, there will be no more lively preaching: Paul is in prison: all is gone: no; the success of Christ's kingdom is not restricted to this or that minister, or generation of ministers: no; himself who lives for ever, shall see the fruits of his soul's travel. We, either ministers or people, see little of the fruit of Christ's soul-travel; but himself sees it all.

Now, I say, he shall see it made out by the way that enemies take to diminish it. Says the apostle, Phil. i. 13.—*My bonds in Christ are made manifest in the palace, and in all other places.* It came to the emperor's court, when Paul was a prisoner for the gospel of Christ: which argueth, that the gospel was thereby gaining some of the fruits of Christ's soul-travel there. What says the court? Will the gospel grow, when ministers are imprisoned and hanged for it?—But let them say what they will, they shall not be able to hinder it. Therefore, this is good news this day, Sirs. Indeed, if Christ have no more soul's travel to gather in in Scotland, then they will carry the day against this persecuted party: but who will deny? yea, he has revealed it; that he has yet a seed therein; yea, a seed yet unborn, *that shall do service unto him.* Well then, he shall see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied. A

2. Word of good news to the poor believer in Christ, that sees little fruit of his believing, or of any thing

and

Christ has done. Alas, thou art greatly discouraged ; but be comforted : he shall yet *see the travel of his soul, and be satisfied* : and close with him by faith : and then he shall see the travel of his soul to satisfaction, and that shall satisfy thee. A

3. Thing I have to tell you, is, that as long as our Lord Jesus Christ has any poor sinner to bring in in Britain and Ireland, there shall be a preached gospel to gather in that soul's travel : and it will not be got banished away. We give you a pleasant token for good, whatever be on the back of it, and bless his name for it ; we hope it will be engraven on the tables of flesh, and not on stone only : we hope that there shall be a record on many a conscience, that not a little fruit has appeared in in these persecuted meetings. Take notice therefore, of the wondrous works of the Lord, and these his marvellous doings, even those in the wild places of Northumberland, that was a land that one could scarcely ride through, without being spoiled by thieves and robbers ; now a thievish country is become a civil country, and a people of no understanding are made a wise and prudent people by the gospel ; a people who were without God and Christ in the world appear now to have tenderness of heart amongst them. We do not say all ; but we say there are many ; and we hope that all the devils in hell and wicked men upon earth, shall not be able to blot out this testimony, even the conversion of sinners, wherever these meetings came : which is a testification that the Lord has done more good by them than by any other meetings in the land. And we beseech you, think it no commendation to the poor, weak and feckless instruments.—But take a look of what God the Lord has done by a persecuted gospel ; and yet I wot well, they that plant are nothing in his hand ; for I am sure, that the church of Scotland had never less reason to boast of a great ministry than of the instruments of this work.—However, it is a good token that he is not yet gone away, but is amongst us. O that he might see much of the travel of his soul amongst us ! would ye have him making another visit ? then let him see somewhat of the travel of his soul amongst you. Is there any of you that will give him the great errand he came to the world for ? that was to save poor sinners. Have none of you a soul to save ? that is the thing he seeks. Art thou in bonds under the devil ? Art thou a poor needy thing, made up
for

of wants and necessities? And hast thou any thing ado for him? then let him thereby see the travel of his soul, and be satisfied. The

Last word, and I have done, *and he shall be satisfied.* This shall be all satisfying: the meanest and poorest believer amongst you, shall be no better satisfied than he is, when one of the fruit of his soul's travel is brought in. It is long since he said, that *his delights were with the sons of men*: that was his delight to get the travel of his soul amongst them. Luke x. 21. There the disciples come and tell him good news: say they, we have been out preaching; but behold the virtue lay in this; and through thy name, *even the devils are subject unto us.*—*And he said, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.* And it is said, *Behold in that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, &c.* He was well satisfied; he got the travel of his soul upon these poor people accomplished: he has such pleasure in seeing the travel of his soul brought in, that it made him enter first upon that soul-travel with great delight. When sacrifices and burnt-offerings would not do, then he offered himself a sacrifice to be consumed in the Father's wrath. O strange to think upon that frame that he offers it in! *Lo, I come! in the volume of thy book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God.* It is satisfaction unto me, because I see the travel of my soul; and what makes it so? I'll tell you what it is.

1. He must triumph over devils, principalities and powers; and so let them see that even these that made him suffer, he shall have fruit for his pains.

2. Because it is his will, pleasure and complacency that poor lost sinners be brought in: therefore he rejoices in their salvation. The poor creature was a captive of hell and in the prison of death, under the devil's power. Well, they are now set at freedom, and Christ is well satisfied with that. And

3. Because he was once an enemy; now he is become a friend. He was once an outcast of heaven; now he is admitted again unto the house of God. He was before outlawed and excommunicated from the presence of the king; now he is brought into favour again: and why? *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the wicked's living, and much less in their dying so.* The

4. Ground of his satisfaction, is, that there is a manifestation of the glorious riches of his grace displayed in and by the soul-sufferings of Christ. And that there is a vent and way made out for the discovering and bringing out all the treasures of the riches of free grace, stored up in God, that the creature never saw before: for that intent that his mighty power might be made known. Manifold is the riches of his grace. And

5. He rejoices that by his soul's travel, he has satisfied justice, and made it and mercy meet together, and kiss each other in the salvation and glorification of the sinner. Justice says, they must die: Then Mercy replies, they must not die: Some of them must be the objects of my infinite mercy. Justice cries out again, they must die; because they stained my spotless nature; and as I am God, I cannot sit with this wrong. And so there is, as it were, a contest about the object, the elect of God: Justice says, how shall their salvation be brought about? Mercy says, by the Mediator God-man it shall be satisfied, and thereby the elect restored, redeemed and admitted again into the favour of God and their glorification for ever. And herein justice is not wronged in the least, but paid to the utmost farthing of its demand.—And then this is made out, *Psal. lxxxv. 10. Mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth springs out of the earth, or from Jesus Christ that plant of renown, and righteousness looks down from heaven high.* This sweet agreement is a part of our Lord's satisfaction by his soul-travel.

Now, I proceed no further, only for another use of the doctrine. If the travel of Christ's soul, and the obtaining of the fruits of it, be satisfying unto him, then let me tell you, and take it with you, that it reproves those who are dissatisfied that he is doing good to sinners, whether they be pretended friends or open enemies: for there are many enviers; many have an evil eye, because our God is good.—Now, he is making the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hand, or in the hand of those whom he has given commission: and I know there are many now, that are not well-pleated the gospel thrives so well: and indeed, there is no reason to envy it. Poor persecuted people have enough to envy them, though they have no envy of their chiefest gain.—But
there

there are many enviers of the gathering in of the travel of Christ's soul, now a-days. But envy it who will, they are stated enemies to our Lord Jesus Christ; and ye may tell them that we said so in the name of the Lord. And I tell you further, that he is well satisfied to see his soul's travel, and what art thou, O man or woman, that can be dissatisfied with what he is satisfied with? Is it thy eye-fore to see that he sees the travel of his soul? O heavy work! let him employ whom he will to gather it in, but be thou satisfied.—There is a generation of prelates and of their underlings amongst this sort now: but it is dreadful that they are so dissatisfied, that any of his servants should come on purpose to gather in the fruit of his soul's travel about their hand: for that poor people grow better, and some begin to seek more after God and his ways. All the curates in the country cannot get it denied. What say they, they are fanatics and brain-cracked, giddy-headed bodies: they will not let it light that it is the fruits of Christ's soul's travel. Ey, go tell the council and bloody soldiers, that such a sort of folk are started up in the county side. Ey, go fetch a party to apprehend them; for they cannot get leave to live in peace, while such are in the parish: these are an uneasy generation, not like unto Moses, when he heard of the spirit of prophecy falling upon others. Says he,—*would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets.* So be not dissatisfied that his soul-travel be brought in, seeing it is an evident mark of an enemy unto Jesus Christ to be so.

Another thing from this doctrine, is, seeing Christ's soul's travel is so well-pleasing to him, then thou and I, minister and professor, should do all in our power to gather in the travel of Christ's soul. It is true, he has honoured ministers to be, as it were, co-workers with him in this: and *who is sufficient for these things?* and O who would not work in this work, and encourage themselves to go thro' both fire and water to get any thing brought about to please such a master. Woes me, that men are not satisfied that Christ get fruit of the travel of his soul. We should be well satisfied, if he gets fruit; and be displeased who will, we may care the less.

Lastly, And I shall say no more: I would again ask at you, what answer shall we take back to our Master, that may be a satisfying report of you that are here unto him? Is there any ungodly sinner, debauched profane swearer,

drunkard, ranter, &c. or even the back of an old persecutor, or malignant? Hast thou any satisfactory news for us to take back unto our Master? Wilt thou give us these news to carry back, "This day I fully renounce all my former kind of life and conversation, and resolve to stand to my word, and from henceforth will not *go back, nor turn from thee at all.*" Or shall we take back this word, That now ye are content to take him in all the terms that ever he offered himself unto you? Will ye give us these good news to return to our Master? what will ye give or do to satisfy him for the travel of his soul? Come away, poor man and woman, that is glad to close the bargain; thou that hast been, as it were, putting thy hand to the pen, and yet dare not seal it; wilt thou come and put thy hand to the covenant that thou hast entered into long since? He loves that thou should set thy seal to it: seal it with thy hearty consent: say with Thomas, if thou can say no more, *My Lord and my God.* Tell us, if we shall say this of you, believers in Christ, that dare not, perhaps, well lay claim unto him as your God, that now you can confidently say, *My Lord and my God.* Shall we take back this news, that we have thus much of his soul's travel? Shall we tell him these good news, that here we have found out a willing people that is willing to follow him through the wilderness, and to bear his cross, and witness for him; and that ye will adhere unto his truths closely, *and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth?* O if there be a willing mind amongst you; and if ever ye did a pleasure or satisfaction, do it to him that did displeasure unto himself to please you: for the Lord's sake do something satisfactory to him, and it shall be your own satisfaction for ever.

Now to him who is able to work this in you, be all the glory and praise,

A

S E R M O N

Preached at LITTLE-GOVAN, by Mr. JOHN
DICKSON, *January —, 1675.*

S E R M O N VIII.

I SAMUEL xxx. 6.

And David was greatly distressed :—But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

THE cases of the people of God are various and many ; and their exercises and out-gates are as many ; and this compleats the life of a Christian. David was here an excellent man : he was a mirror of piety, holiness and excellent experiences in communion and fellowship with God.—He was a man *according to God's own heart.*—He was the flower of the faithful, and portrait of that little world wherein is contained the map of the choicest extracts of the enjoyments of God ; and that through many crosses, tribulations, duties, communications, influences of the Spirit, and much grace, he behoved to enter into the kingdom.—Here is one of his cases, and with it one of his exercises ; and therein his case is very sad ; he was distressed ; and that is no new thing to the followers of Christ ; *but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God ;* that is the prime of his exercises, and the flower and spirit of it.—There are many folk that will venture far upon God's hand in the external way ; but in a peculiar way, and for the insuring of it

it to the soul, to venture soul and body, interest and advantages, heaven and all that he enjoys, that is a great and weighty business; however, such venturous exploits are, by the matching of faith.—*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me unto glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.*—There are many things in this work that might captivate the sons of men; but Christ Jesus is altogether lovely, he extracts the beauty, pleasure, comfort, honour and advantage of all created perfections, and centers all in himself, that may prove the proper object of our choice; and it is Christ's testimony of Mary, when he says, *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, that shall not be taken away from her.* This shall be a durable portion, when the Son of God shall shew that sweet countenance at the last day, when these elements shall melt with a fervent heat, the stars shall drop down like figs fully ripe, the world shall be dissolved, and *the heavens shall depart as a scroll rolled together.*—*But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*

David had now lost his wife and children; his substance was taken; his house was burnt: he had lost the kindness of his men; Saul was his enemy; and he was out of favour with his friends and the court: In a word, he had lost all that was dear unto him in the world: what can he do? well, *But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God;* in communion with a God in Christ; and that is better than the world, and all things therein.

Now, I come to speak a few things from the words, and but briefly, And

I. The people of God, notwithstanding their interest, relation and enjoyment of God, of which they may boast very much; yet may be tryed in this world with great distress. This is very clear in this passage; few could parallel David for interest in God, interest in heaven, interest in duty, gifts, graces and communications; and yet for all this, he is greatly distressed: so the people of God, notwithstanding their interest, and all their enjoyments in the world, may sometimes be in great distress.

II. The greatest distresses of the people of God are sometimes immediately preparatory to their greatest mercies and enjoyments. Even when the poor creature is almost sinking for fear, and saying, now all is gone; or with David in another case, saying, *One day or another, I shall fall by the hands of Saul.*—But oftentimes it falls out that these are the dawns of the greatest mercies.—And this is clear in David's case: he was greatly distressed; and what follows? 1. David encourages himself in the Lord. 2. He assembles his men, pursues and overcomes all his enemies, recovers all his spoil, and returns with triumph. So then the distresses of the people of God, when they amount to the greatest height, are preparative to the greatest mercies.

III. Observe, that this same interest, secured in God, is the foundation of the greatest encouragement to the people of God. When a man is brought so low, that he knows not what hand to turn to; what shall he do, poor soul? If he can but cast up his accounts, and see how it stands betwixt God and him; and upon this issue, God befriends him; then let him venture. So then an interest secured in God, is the foundation of the greatest enjoyment and encouragement from God. This is clear in David's case, he turns about, and casts up his accounts; turns over the volume of his former enjoyments and experiences, and runs through the promises, and looks to the covenant, and what had formerly past betwixt God and his soul: I wot well one day, says he, I was interested in him. *But David encouraged himself in the Lord:* and it is that which resolves every word; a great word in the original. It runs thus, he encouraged himself in the Lord of hosts, who made the world, heaven and earth, &c. He gets God on his side; and then he says, *Though an host should encamp against me; my heart shall not fear, and though ten thousand should come against me, why, the Lord is upon my side:—the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* Then he encouraged himself in the Lord his God: that is to say, though there were no more people in all the world than myself, God who made the universe is my God; if there were no more promises made, he is my God for all. So let the world do what they will, if ye well serve God, it shall be the comfort of my heart; but every one of you should turn your back upon

upon my God, I cannot help that : for *me and my family, we will serve the Lord.* That was a choice resolution : it would perhaps weary you to insist long upon these truths : therefore we shall only mention or speak a few words upon each of them at present. And

I. Although one should be a choice Christian in respect of interest, relation and enjoyment in God, and may even have that epithet that was once given Titus the Roman emperor, *the delight of mankind* : yet with David here, they may fall into great distress, that may make them go weeping and mourning with a heavy heart, and even sometimes be so despondent, that they can have no comfort at all ; and yet at last they will go to heaven, singing that blessed song, which is the matter of praise and admiration to both angels and men.—In speaking to this truth, I shall notice some of the principal dismal-like providences that the people of God may be trysted with in this life. And

1st, It may fall out in providence, that a child of God may be rent from the very nearest of his relations that his affections are most set upon. Christians, after all that they can plead in this respect, may be so crushed, that they shall not have one of these friends to vent their love and kindness unto, or it may fall out, that the greatest disaster may fall out in his own house and family.—I think, says the poor believer, I am a world's wonder, that all things go thus wrong with me : for all the friends and relations I have, I cannot find any thing of the favour of God there : and yet this may be previous to the greatest mercy the poor creature meets with ; for if you turn the other side of the leaf, you will see there is mercy in that providence. I shall observe two particular instances to prove the truth of this.

1. Jacob and Esau were two brethren, and besides were two twins which lay in their mother's belly at one time together ; and yet a difference falls in between them, when they arrived at manhood. Jacob flies for his life, and Esau pursues for it. And it falls out, that in flying from his brother, Jacob has nothing but his cloaths on his back, and his staff in his hand : *for with my staff I passed over this Jordan.* He was in great distress ; and all this was occasioned by his elder brother, that should have been his kindest friend in the world. So the greatest distress of the people of God may some-
times

times proceed from their nearest relations; and yet that was preparatory unto the greatest mercy: for when he is gone into the fields, he falls asleep, and there he meets with God in another manner than ever before.—The angels ascending and descending on the ladder, and and the Lord speaking from above it in a wonderful way, and he says, *This is surely none other but the house of God.*—*And he called the name of that place Beth-el.* Jacob became an excellent man upon the back of this: his former distress led him to this his mercy. It is said, he, or rather Abraham *went out, not knowing whither he went*: for God led him, and freed him from that distress he was in.—The

2. Instance, is, of David: he had many crosses, and yet he had as many mercies as crosses. But he had some crosses extraordinary. A son was born to him called Absalom, who was the bravest man perhaps in the world, and David had the greatest delight in him. He was a man of the greatest perfection from the crown of his head unto the sole of his foot: and yet he, who was the glory of his father, became his greatest heart-break. Yea, he sought his father's life: and when David fled from him, he falls a-weeping; and goes up the ascent of the mount of Olives bare-footed, and the people with him: and the reason was, his own beloved son had conspired to take away his life. So ye may see, that it may fall out in folks' own families, that may occasion their greatest distress. But,

2dly, These dismal-like providences may flow from something in providence, that seems so intricate that the people of God are not able to master these difficulties, and may occasion such an astonishing damp upon their spirits, that they shall not know what hand to turn to. This we may see to be the case with Israel, when they were about to enter the Red Sea:—the sea was before them, and the rocks on every hand, and they knew not how to escape. That was a great distress; it was an invincible-like difficulty: what do they? They cry unto the Lord, and say to Moses, *Because there were no graves in Egypt, thou hast taken us away to die in the wilderness.* Where was Aaron, Caleb, Joshua, &c.? Their spirits are now drooping, when the people are in such invincible-like distress and difficulties. But providence orders a great outgate for them here. Though thou mayest think that the counsel of men cannot invent an

outgate of this kind in the case thou art in, O believer; yet thou mayest come through; and the next day see all thy enemies drowned. There is a poor man or woman in a great temptation from the eclipse and overclouding the views of his former interest in God, and enjoyments of his presence; and sits down and weeps, and cries, alas! its a hell upon earth; and I shall never get out of this: And there is none in the world that can comfort me. Nay, had they all the people of God in the world about them, the result would be, *miserable comforters are ye all unto me*. No help below the clouds:—former experiences will not do: secret duty will not do: and Christian prayer and conference in fellowship will not do: nothing but a cast from his own hand from heaven can do; and that only can cure the distempered soul. He with his own arm cut the sea asunder, and made the people go through both the Red Sea and Jordan on dry ground. The words of Moses, the song of Miriam, or the courage of Joshua, in themselves, without this, could not have done it. And

3dly, It sometimes falls out, that the people of God may be trysted with great eclipses of God's countenance by desertion. The child of God may be at that with it, —*Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Psal. lxxvii. 7.* Or with Heman, Psalm lxxxviii. 5. *Free amongst the dead, like the slain whom thou remembereft no more.* And that also seemed a dismal-like case with the church, Lam. iii. 8.—*When I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.* If it were but the suspending of his presence for a little, it seems to be for a long time. So eclipses of the sweet countenance of God brings great distress upon his people, Psal. xlii. 1. *As the heart panteth after the water brook, so doth my soul after the living God; nay, my tears hath been my meat day and night.* He spent some time in that course, when he says, *When shall I come and appear before God.* If I knew the time, it would be refreshing to me: but it is so lengthened out, that I doubt if ever I shall see the days that I have seen before. Now this brings great distress: *My soul is cast down within me, while they say continually unto me, Where is thy God?* I am in great desertion, and there is something that occasions this.

1. The Lord hides the light of his countenance, and the man walks in darkness, as it were, at midnight, under gospel-dispensations: he goes to the preaching of the

the gospel, but he meets not with God there : he cannot go unto that light that formerly shone upon his soul. And,

2. His life is eclipsed, when the power of the grace of God is taken away from his soul. Many folk hear sermon, yea many sermons ; but they are like those poor folk that died by the dyke side not long since, in some of your remembrances : when there was a kind of famine, the poor things died for hunger ; though it was not altogether for want of bread, but of the blessing of God upon it : for the more they did eat, they grew like atomies or skeletons, and so they staved as it were for hunger, never being satisfied. So a number of people under gospel-dispensations have perhaps preaching enough, but nothing of the blessing with it. Perhaps they will tell you a note of the sermon ; but look unto them, and you will see them dying, and the word of this bread in their mouth : they are not fat and flourishing, or growing up as calves in the stalls, like Christians, in *old age fat and flourishing*. But they are dying with the bread of the word of God in their mouths, which is a sad symptom of the want of the blessing and light of God's countenance upon it. It is not enough to run after preaching ; for many follow that way that have little or no lively frame within them for all that.

3. There is an eclipse of the comfort and consolations of the spirit, which is a sign of deep desertion : you know it was one of the blessings of our God by his promise, when he was taking his farewell of his people and followers in this world, *I will send the Comforter unto you, and he shall teach you all things*. This is the comforter that brings consolation unto the soul of a believer. Now, when one wants that, he wants God's kindness ; and there are many who go to preaching ; but their hearts are not, as it were, skipping within them : there are many who go to secret duty ; but when they come out of their closet, their hearts are not warmed by the comforts of the holy Spirit in duty.

4. There is a palpable eclipse of the peace of conscience that passes all natural understanding.—There are many, who, when they eat their meat are troubled ; and when in fellowship with others, they have no peace of conscience. This is a sign of the want of the light of God's countenance ; and thus desertion, and the length-

ning out of it, occasions the distress of the people of God.

4thly, The people of God may be trysted with this disinal-like providence; that is, sad disappointment on the back of great experiences. The two disciples going to Emmaus were choice Christians: Christ joins himself unto them, and asks, *What manner of communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk and are sad?* Master, say they, it is because we are in distress. Says Christ, what ails you? they give him an account of it, and say, *Art thou a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that are come to pass in these days — concerning Jesus of Nazareth? — We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, to-day is the third day, since these things were done: — our very hearts are like to break because of this disappointment.* So then disappointments upon the back of great experiences bring the people of God into great distress: So it is, Isa. xxvi. 17, &c. Says the church, we have been travelling, and we thought we should have brought forth a man child, or some great thing; but behold, we have *brought forth nothing but wind, we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth.* This was a great disappointment, when they were expecting some great delivery, I have no doubt but the children of Judah, who were carried to Babylon, and were not acquainted with the history of the time of their delivery, thought, that within four or five years the Lord would break the bonds of their captivity; but when it came to twenty, thirty, forty, or sixty years, then it is said, Psal. cxxxvii. that *they went out, and wept by the river of Babylon, and could not so much as think upon music, or the instruments of music: because their expectation was broken.* There are many great promises made concerning the deliverance and restoration of the church; and many of the people of God frustrate their own mercy by spiriting of their hope; and when they are disappointed at this time, many of the people of God begin to faint, because the Lord delays deliverance to his church. Say they, Shall we all die in this wilderness? Is there no door of hope? Shall we not enter into our former possessions, and enjoy our wonted privileges again? It may be, that every one of this generation may die before the recovery of God's work in these lands: yet that day when it comes shall be transportingly glorious; see Psal. xxiv. at the close;

close; a seed that shall be born shall do this.—And let me tell you, that some of you covets in point of Christian fellowship to be very cautious; and why not? But let me tell you another thing, they may have five or six years of hearing, of preaching and sporting themselves about the congregation; and yet perhaps one word dropped touching them on the outside at last may do the turn.—And as to the recovery and revival of the work of God, when ye are all rotting in the graves, solemn assemblies shall be kept and esteemed,—and perhaps those yet unborn, or the poor children that cannot yet discern between their right hand and their left, shall be the persons marching up with the ark of God, and dancing for joy before it.—Remarkable is that instance of six hundred thousand (besides the Levites, women and children) of the children of Israel that came up out of the land of Egypt, there was not a soul of them, save Caleb and Joshua, entered the promised land; but their carcases all rotted in the wilderness: and yet their offspring when they went over Jordan, had brave days; and they fixed their twelve pillars in the midst of the water, as monuments of God's great deliverance; there being no more to do but to pierce their enemies with the sword, and divide their land by lot amongst them. We are very faint with disappointments, when it pleases the Lord to cover his table, and set down upon it the glory of Israel. Then every stranger will say, Now, we expect he comes; yea, he is at the door: and this is the forerunner of the greatest mercy to the church: yet thou must not depend too much to see that, lest thou be frustrated in thy expectation, and so thy spirit be ready to sink within thee for sorrow.

5thly, There may be this dismal-like providence, that may occasion great distress by losses, crosses, afflictions and troubles, both upon the inward and outward man. In this case was Job: he was a good man, had many experiences, and much communion with God; yet it fell out, that the Lord takes all from him: yea, that was not all: some strife falls in betwixt him and his wife: after all his substance and children are gone, a difference takes place between him and his natural, but Christian friends. They were the choicest men perhaps then in the world; and yet they mistook his case, calling him an hypocrite, and he could not endure that.—Yet he was not over-much distressed with all this, till he got another

ther cast in providence, and that was the lengthening out of all these his trials, and the hiding of God's countenance therein. If we may say, that such a man as Job could be broken; he was a mirror for religion: yet we find him in the third chapter of his book, cursing the day of his birth; and he speaks many strange things unto God. O he was in great distress; but in chap. xxiii. 3. he comes to express the language of his soul. *O that I knew where I might find him!* all his distress was nothing to that. He was never prest at the heart, till he finds a great distance betwixt God and his soul. Afflictions, crosses, and external miseries, and these all lengthned out in desertion, occasions great distress.— And ye must not think much of it, when ye are trysted with these things: many of your neighbours have been so dealt with before: it may be thou art poor; well, thanks be to God, there is many poor (at least who were poor) folk in heaven; and many were rich, and became poor, and grew far richer again than before, and yet ventured far. Job was in distress, but he overcame that, ere he died, and so became a victor in point of trial, both respecting internal and external difficulties. But

6thly, There is another dismal like dispensation of providence: and it seems to be the sharpest of all; and that is when God pleases to let the devil and the corruptions of his people loose upon them, even those latent corruptions, that they thought had been now chained up and hemmed in; so that the poor creature that seemed one day to be victorious over a body of sin and death, is now trodden under the feet of these enemies; and that causes great distress, and is made to cry, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. vii. 24. There is something here, that discovers his misery. There are several things discovered in this case.

1. There are great sins discovered, Psal. xl. 12. *Innumerable evils compass me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me: they are more than the hairs of mine head.*

2. There is an awakened conscience; and that cannot be well covered; the noise of it being become so terrible. And

3. There is the wrath of an angry God: there is nothing but wrath discovered. Alas, says the poor soul, I thought.

I thought God and I should never have been at variance again; but now to my cost and sad experience, I find it otherways.

4. There is some kind of impenitence: and in this case, the poor creature cannot be broken hearted enough for sin.

5. There is a suspension of the intimations of the Lord's favour and wonted loving kindneses; so that the poor believer cannot attain to the days of old, and years of antient times. Sin prevailing, an angry God frowning, an awakened conscience tormenting, and a hard heart drooping; O sad, sad! And yet a child of God may be sometimes under such a case as this, see Psal. xxxviii. for a proof of this doctrine.

Now, a word of use: and seeing the Lord has his own children in this world, how comes it to pass, that they are oftentimes in so great distress? I answer first, he does it for trial of some few particulars, which perhaps are in thy case.—And

1st, For the trial of the graces of his own spirit: for instance, when a man is in great distress, the Lord is trying him, if he can believe in such a case, or hope in such a distress: for the people of God are called to the lively exercises of the graces of the spirit of God, especially when their souls are in anguish and distress.

2^{dly}, He does it to see if thou wilt put these graces in exercise, that when thou art in great distress, wilt thou take hold of him by prayer: for still the more that God's people were afflicted, they prayed the more.—*But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*

3^{dly}, He does it to try if they will go the whole round of duties, to be as Job was, when he said, O that I might know where I would find him; I would venture to wander all the world over to find my God: It was a noble resolution in Hannibal. Says he, "I shall wander all the world over to find out my enemies." This was *magnanimous* in a Pagan: So when a Christian in the way of duty, is pursuing after God in ordinances, it is a great matter for a man under a restraint, to walk after the way of a Christian. I will run the ways of thy commandments,—when thou hast enlarged me; but what if he enlarge thee not? it is that which by thy distress he incites thee unto.

In the second place, he tries you with distress, to complete you. The world is not complete by perfection, but it is complete by seeming imperfection. If all the creatures in the world had been made of one size and proportion as to their perfection, it had not been complete: but it consists of devils and men, good and bad, wise and prudent, men and fools: besides all kind of creatures; nay, all sorts of venomous beasts. O say ye, the world would have been better for the want of these: but by your favour it is his work: such imperfect things complete the work. If thou wert still weeping, thou would not be a complete Christian. Therefore he brings the under failings, and suffers temptations to prevail over thee, and makes thy spirit to droop; so that thou art weeping and sighing one day: and glorying the next day, and triumphing in the Lord: and that makes thee a compleat Christian, and tends to complete his work upon thy soul.——Neither would it be a compleat church, if it were not so, that some are imprisoned, some deprived of their worldly substances, and some even brought to the gibbet for the cause of Christ, and all to make a complete church. We may say, in some cases, Episcopacy was a happy trial to the church to render it more compleat: for without such a trial many would have dwined away without life; but the trials, troubles and crosses of the church also render her more compleat. So that thy fainting, doubtings, unbelief, temptations, &c. and thy victory over all these makes thee, as it were, compleat! If thou wert going trembling faintly to heaven, thou wert not compleat, and why? that is for these rather that are above than these below; but this makes thee a man like thyself in matter of profession.

Thirdly, He tries thee that the whole of thy preparation may be running in the right channel, that is, for all the advantages he brings thy soul to hope for; yet he brings thee under distress, that thy seed may spring and his barns may be filled. There is a great difference between a spring time and the harvest. Spring time is a pleasant time: but summer, harvest and winter make up the glory of the year. The good man keeps the seed in his barn, till the spring come; and then the weeds spring up, and if it were still summer, they would overgrow the good grain; but the winter kills them; so that they do not overgrow the good ground. So he waters the

the

the ridges of souls by these troubles to make them fruitful: and *O happy is the man that goes forth, bearing precious seed weeping*, that is, in grief and trouble: and because of a spring time, he shall *return with his sheaves rejoicing*: So Isa. lxvi. 10. *Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her, &c.* And Ezek. ix. 4.—*Go through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof.* Poor folk, they are like to break their hearts; but I am come to make them the seed of the church: some folk are not content to see people mourning, and very angry to see them weeping.—But when it falls out on account of their duty, troubles are the seed time of the church. There is a number of professed Christians that remain as unconcerned at the afflictions of the church and people of God, as if they were living in the wilds of America: and a number that are living betwixt this and the west seas, are as unconcerned with the sufferings of Christ in his mystical members, as if they were living there; and their own consciences bear them witness, if they be bringing forth much fruit to God: but perhaps God will send a blast that will blow up that undermining thing that tends to the destruction of the church:

II. A second observation that I should speak a little to, is, That the greatest distresses of the people of God are preparatory to their greatest mercies; and it is very clear, that in many of the people of God, their greatest distresses have been previous to their greatest enjoyments. Then we must not cast at the distress of the church and poor afflicted people of God: but passing this at present, to hasten; there is a

III. Thing that I shall just name, and come to a close, and it is this; That the same interest in God is the best foundation of encouragement for the people of God in time of distress. *But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.* It was his interest in God that occasioned this. If folk would be rightly fortified against distresses, there is your interest, Psal. xli. 1. *God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in the time of trouble: we will not fear though the earth be removed.* I will not be afraid, and why? Because the Lord is become the sure shelter of his church and people. Now, there are a few

things that pave the way for a distressed child of God in securing an interest in him. And

Here the case may be with some, If I could get my interest secured in God, I would not care what became of me, and all that I have this day in the world. So there are some things requisite in order for the better securing this interest in God; which may serve as an application for the shutting up of the subject at present. And

1. Thou must cast thine eye, O Christian, upon thy former and past experiences; either upon the communications of the Lord's kindness, the out-lettings of his love, or his power, exerted for thy forth-coming in thy journey heavenward. For instance, David encounters his enemies, and his adversaries grow, namely Goliath, he defies the armies of the living God; and the armies of the living God are like to faint for fear of him. David comes, and ventures on a strange attempt, in order to damp the adversaries, and raise up his own spirit; and what does he? Says he, I will venture. O says the king of Israel, thou art but a stripling: what canst thou do? But says David, I will venture, O king; I was feeding my father's flock: and there came a lion and a bear; and I slew them both; and the Lord that delivered me out of the paws of the lion, and the mouth of the bear, will also deliver me out of the hands of this uncircumcised Philistine. Here was an intimation of the Lord's respect unto him by a former experience; and upon that, says he, I will venture my blood upon him: and afterwards he entered the lists with Goliath. He said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? and he cursed him by his gods: I will give thy flesh to be meat to the beasts of the earth, &c. But, says David, hear me one word: *thou comest unto me with a sword and a spear; but I come to thee in the name of the living God, whose armies thou hast defied*, and that upon an old experience. So, in a distressed case, when the people of God are brought very low; yet they may insure themselves, and adventure on difficulties by recapitulating former experiences.—The day was once when Christ trusted with my soul; and once I was obliged to say, *The Lord is my God*. Now I will venture my life and all I have this day upon that, if the Lord call me to it. It was at such and such a communion, and there was such an in-break upon my soul of his loving-kindness, that

that I cared for nothing. So reflect upon that old experience : look back to him whom thou avouchedst to be thy God in former times ; and why may he not be thy God now also ?

2. The people of God ought to relieve their spirits in distress by casting their eyes upon him instead of all relations in these days. He is thy father, thy husband, thy elder brother, thy best friend, and sympathizer with his people in all their afflictions ; and what a privilege is this to be thus related unto him who is the king of saints, and the glory of the church ; and not only so, but thy own God by old experiences ? Take him then in all the relations in which he holds out himself unto thy soul, for securing thy interest in him against all distress ; and this will occasion great encouragements. How much did David encourage himself in a view of these relations, when he says, Psal. xviii. 2. *The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer : my God, my strength, in whom I will trust ; my buckler and the horn of my salvation in whom I will trust.* And in this he encourages himself to bless and magnify the Lord. And

3. Take a view of the Lord in his divine attributes : and that may help to hold up thy soul, O believer ; for he is mighty to save ; and to save thee in all thy distresses and intricate difficulties. He is also infinite in counsel and so can set thy foot on a rock, *and establish thy way before thee.* Thou canst not tell what will become of thy own case, nor the affairs of the church of Christ : wilt thou then cast all these over upon the infinity of God ? he sits at the helm of affairs, and steers the rudder ; and so points the ship whithersoever she is to go ; and though we should be overclouded with never so many discouragements ; yet God is the Lord, see the xcvi. and xcix. Psalm. The beginning of both is, *The Lord reigneth, and let the earth rejoice, and the people tremble ; his hand is lifted up :* and if ye look on his attributes so, ye will see his mercy therein, Psal. ciii. 13. *Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth all that fear him.* And think ye, that he will lay more upon them, than they are able to bear. He may lay troubles upon them and trials : and what the matter ? that is his way with the church : but what follows ? he relieves his people, and *delivers Jacob out of all his troubles.* O sirs, if we were rightly fortified against the distress of these times,

the children of God might have a pleasant life this day : *It is God that justifieth*, and who may lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? Let him then give a cast of his kindness to his people, and secure their interest to them ; it is he that justifieth me, may ye say : and O but ye are happy, O believers, that have an interest in such a powerful and wise God. He is one that guides his own with his everlasting arms around them : as the walls are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord encompasseth his church ; and he that neither slumbers nor sleeps, watches over her. I'll tell you, that the faintness of spirits proceeds from your want of faith.—*O ye of little faith, how long shall I be with you ?* &c. When the centurion came unto me, says the Saviour about the case of his servant, I bade him go home, his servant would be healed : he did so, and found him whole at the set hour. But now, ye doubt of my power and abilities : How long will ye be without faith ? If ye had faith but as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say *unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall be done.* This seems to be the worst disaster, that many Christians meet with ; they will not venture their souls case upon him. *O ye of little faith, why do ye doubt ?* Some Christians will venture their souls salvation upon him, but have not confidence in him concerning his church and interest in the world. But do ye think, that he has not an equal interest in both ? and has he not promised to build the walls of his Jerusalem, and to put on the top stone thereof with shouting, *saying, grace, grace, unto it ?* There is no ground to doubt, but antichrist and all his antichristian crew, shall yet be brought under the feet of the living God ; and all these antichristian doctrines now taught and applauded by men, shall yet be trodden under foot. *For he must not reign, until he have put all enemies under his feet : The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death,* 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. He shall tread under his feet the nations, piercing unto their very heart with the soles of his feet, driving them to pieces, as a potsherd is broken to shivers ; and if ye were rightly acquainted with him, ye would have the faith of this : And tho' we be under a cloud for the time by the present discouragements, what the matter of that ? yet we cannot mistrust the Lord, that has promised he shall reign in spite of all his enemies.—There are brave days O Christians, coming, when what concerns himself shall

shall be accomplished: The days are coming, that these poor despised people, that are now weeping, sighing, sobbing, and desponding, shall be up.

Poor peevish spirited folk that have no faith in God, think that religion wholly consists in sighing, and drooping; but no such matter; it is the part of the people of God, to look up unto the captain of their salvation, who through *suffering was made perfect*. He has promised to do all things for you that have an interest in him thus secured. David encouraged himself in the Lord his God: follow this example, and all shall be well. But we shall say no more.—But to his name be the praise.

N. B. If the Pages specified could have admitted, I intended to have here, along with this, published another pretty large but very faithful sermon by the same author, preached in the year 1680. from these words Luke ii. 35. *Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*

In this discourse, he shews the evil of the indulgence, cels paying, bonding, &c. And when treating on the word swords, very elegantly describes these four kinds of swords spoken of in scripture: *viz.* The sword of justice, the sword of judgment, the sword of reproach, and the sword of many sorrows. When describing this second sword, the sword of judgment, he has the following very remarkable sentences: “ We have had a
“ bloody sword amongst us already, and who knows
“ but the next sword may be the sword of his judgment?
“ we hear of swords now in several places of the coun-
“ try hanging in the air, as clear as glass (or christal)
“ and when some put the question, what this can mean?
“ Some put this commentary on it, that there is yet
“ more blood to be shed; and who knows but this may
“ be meant by it also, that the sword of the Lord’s judg-
“ ment is bathed in heaven, and made ready to exe-
“ cute justice and judgment upon the generation, who
“ will not fear, serve and obey him. And we declare
“ unto you this night, that as the Lord lives, if ye live
“ any number of years, ye shall see stranger days than
“ ever ye have yet seen; for God is coming with great
“ wrath and indignation against this land:—And no won-
“ der it be so, for all the unparalleled wickedness that
“ ever was done in a land, is done in this land. In all
“ the history we ever read, divine or human, we never
“ read

“ read of a worse generation on the earth than we in
 “ Britain are at this day, &c.” Now, how applicable
 this is to our present circumstances, must be left with
 the reader.

A
 S E R M O N

Preached at *Mill-house*, in the Parish of KILBRIDE,
 by GABRIEL SEMPLE, *March 21. 1679.*

S E R M O N IX.

ISAIAH lv. 6.

*Seek ye the Lord while he may be found : call upon him
 while he is near,*

MAN once stood in good terms with God, Sirs :
 O but man, when he was first created, was
 a happy and glorious creature ! *He was made but a little
 lower than the Angels ;* for his glory and his holiness was
 such, that as the friend of God, he might have spoken
 as familiarly to his Lord and creator, as a man speaks to
 his friend. But O he sinned away that privilege, and
 the Lord chafed him away, and excluded him from pa-
 radise : that was a sad change on Adam, when the Lord's
 voice was terrible unto him in the garden ;—says Adam,
 I heard thy voice in the garden ; and I was afraid : what
 fears thee, Adam ? What ails you at my voice ? It used
 not to be a terror unto you : have you sinned ? Adam,
 I am

I am sure something is not right here: what, have ye eaten of the forbidden tree, and sinned against me? no wonder that you are afraid; for I am become your enemy for that: and now begone from my sight and presence, (until ye be reconciled unto me in another way and manner;——and that through the blood of my own Son.) There was Adam and all his posterity banished forth from the presence of God. Now, what estate is man then in? He is in a estate that he cannot look God in the face, and God cannot look him in the face, but he is a terror unto him.—Now, till he be reconciled by Jesus Christ, he cries nothing but, hide us from the face of him that *sits upon the throne*, from the Lamb, &c. Hills and mountains, cover us from his glory; for we cannot endure his spotless holiness; but tho' this be the case with all mankind, yet bless the Lord, that has found out another way, whereby he reconciles him again unto himself; that is, in and through the blood of his own Son, his sent and well beloved Son, to become man; and in that nature to suffer in his merit and mediation for man's sin and transgression: and thereby to be reconciled unto God again. There man has access unto his holiness; man may come boldly to the throne of his grace, and none to make him afraid. O the Lord is got off the throne of justice, and for Christ's sake is seated now upon the throne of mercy, love and grace: and what says he now? what cries his messenger here unto you? but,—*Seek ye the Lord, while he is to be found; call ye upon his name, while he is near.* Christ has brought God the Father near;—*for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.* And therefore this is the charge given all his messengers, that they should tell all the world, that, if ever they would come near him, they must do it in Christ. O if ye would be acquainted with him, it must be in and through his precious Son Jesus Christ: if you would have that enmity taken away, and be made friends with him again, ye *must seek the Lord while he is to be found.* In the words ye have.

1. The exhortation to this great duty; and it is, *seek the Lord.* There is the duty of all the posterity of Adam. Men and women, what is your duty and work in the world, or business here away? It is not to eat, drink, sleep, live, die and perish, like the beasts: no, your great work is to seek the Lord upon great business to call upon the name of the Lord. Seek the favour
and

and friendship of God : seek nearness, union and communion with him. Seek to glorify God here, and to enjoy him hereafter : this is your great work and business in the world. And

2. We have the encouragement given, that is, *while he is to be found*. Why, say ye, need we seek him ? he will not be found of us now : we have offended him by breaking the covenant of works. Now he has cast us out with our forefathers, for their and our sins and transgressions. No, says the spirit of God, for all this, there may be peace made with him yet ; for as far as he is gone, he may yet be found, if we take the right way with : it he is yet nigh at hand : seek him *while he is to be found, call upon him while he is near*. The observation from the words, is——

That the Lord Jesus Christ is not shut up from poor souls ; but if any have a mind for him, they may find him. James 1. 5. *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, which giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth none.*—He is not on the reserve, he is not so shut up from sinners, that he is not to be found.—Indeed, he may sometimes, as it were, go to his place, that ye may seek the more after him : and I shall give you the following evidences that the Lord is not shut up, or unaccessable to the children of men. And

1st, Because he has commanded all men and women to seek him ; and this says, he is not upon his keeping (so to speak) from them, when he has commanded all the children of Adam, all at least within the visible church, *seek ye Lord, while he is to be found, &c.* He has given out the royal commandment for it ; and indeed sometimes when this is followed out it passes into a law. In Aſa's days, who was a good king and that is a great blessing to a land or people ; it is said 2 Chron. xv. 12. *And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their hearts, &c.* And that whosoever sought not the Lord, should be put to death, whether man or woman, &c.—O when shall such an act come from the rulers in these lands, that such as will not seek the Lord shall be put to death ! Ye see the Lord not only commands it, but he threatens judgment for not seeking of him, *pour out thy fury on the heathen, and the families that call not on thy name.*

2^{dly}, This says, that the Lord is content to be sought unto ; and he tells where they may find him. After

Christ's

Christ's resurrection, what says the angel to the women, Christ is not here: where is he gone? the world is wide and large: we know not where to seek him: but says the angel, he is *gone before you unto Gallilee, and there shall ye see him*—There he trusted with you before he suffered, and there ye shall find him. Do not think then, that Christ is keeping himself up from you.

3dly, Because he has made many promises, and given great encouragements, that if they follow on to seek the Lord, they shall find him. He has made many a sweet and encouraging promise, that they may seek him and follow out this great duty. And

4thly, He gives them a blessed welcome, that seek him. He upbraids none, but makes them all welcome. He is easily overcome by them, Song iii. 4.—*I found him, whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go,* &c. says the spouse; and he is well content to be holden of her. I say the great welcome he gave the prodigal son, when he comes to himself: Says he, I will go back again to my fathers house, and confess my sins, and so glorify God: what does the father? he goes out to meet him, and says, is this my Son! He as it were, gives him not leave to speak, but flies into his neck, and kisses him, saying, *This is my Son, that was dead, and is yet alive again, that was lost and is found.* Such a meeting betwixt Christ and the soul is, as was between Jacob and Joseph: *It is enough that my Son Joseph is alive:* And it is said, he wept on his neck; this says, he is content to be sought, and gives great welcome and encouragement; *bring the fatted calf and the best raiment to put upon him, &c.*

Now, Sirs, here is a great witness against you in the day of the Lord; if ye will not come and seek mercy in time through the blood of Jesus, for cleansing from your sins. Forsake your evil ways, and if this were the case, the fatted calf would be killed. If Scotland were on the turning hand, we would get another feast yet, for a new marriage bargain. Yea, it is said, *there is joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner:* There is much sorrow in the world, when a poor soul turns to God; the devil and the world is saying, we have lost a good comrade.—Ay, but there is joy in heaven for that: it is said, at the conversion or repentance of one sinner, there is joy in heaven. O but that says, that Christ is not upon his hiding (so to speak) from his people.

Use, Now, if it is so, that the Lord is thus to be found : *seek the Lord, while he is to be found ; call upon him, while he is near.* The Lord is not shut up yet, as to Scotland ; their assemblies says, that Christ is yet to be found ; that he keeps up a public displayed banner in spite of all his enemies, both papists, prelates, and malignants, and all their laws and arms : Christ is covering a gospel table here and there : and what is he proclaiming by that banner, but *if any man will make peace with me, let him take hold of my strength, and he shall make peace with me?* Christ is crying this to Scotland : this says he is not upon the reserve with us ; then *seek him while he is to be found, and call upon him while he is near.* And I shall notice some of the places, and also of the times, wherein ye will most likely find him. And

1st, Ye will find him in secret. If ye seek him aright, be sure to seek him there. Says Christ, when thou prayest, *shut thy doors, and pray to thy father which is in secret : and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* Alas ! I fear, that there be many folk that come to meetings and conventicles, (as they are called) that are not given to secret prayer and seeking of God. Parents, I exhort you to exhort your children, to seek God in secret prayer ; and masters, exhort your servants to seek him this way. There are also places, yea, houses, wherein ye will more readily find him than in other places : see Jacob when coming to his Father ; Laban behind him, and saw before him : he sent his wives and whole substance before him : what, will ye stay alone here all night ? O says Jacob, I have a friend to speak with this night : and I have set this time apart for it ; and I have a secret errand ; as Ehud said, when he killed Eglon, I have a secret message unto thee O king : So a soul that is right exercised has still some secrets with the Lord, that even the nearest of its relations must not know of. It may be confessing or mourning for some secret sin, or transgression, or secret suit for the mortification of some secret sin or corruption,—or some secret wrestling with God that it may have some testimony of its sincerity before him. Therefore it is this secret duty that is so much commended. Jacob wrestled with the angel of the covenant, and there he got a fair trial, and a blessed tryste, as ye have it Hof. xii. 4. *Yea he had power over the angel, and prevailed : He wept ; and made supplication*

unto

unto him, &c. Where found he him? in Bethel. O Sirs, secret seeking of God is a great duty. If ye would find him, ye must be secret seekers of God, John i. A Nathaniel indeed:—but, how knowest thou that? said Nathaniel to Christ, when he called him an *Israelite indeed*. *I saw thee under the fig tree*. Very likely, I know the place where thou hast fellowship with me in secret. There are some folk at this with it, that they know not where they say their secret prayers;—neither is there a set form of prayers that ye must confine yourselves unto; but if thou be a true seeker of God, thou wilt neither confine thyself to set forms, nor ordinary times, but thou wilt set some times apart for it. And so if ye would find the Lord, ye must seek him in secret.

2dly, Ye will find him not only in secret prayer, in reading of the word, and confessing of your sins, but also in Christian fellowship, or society meetings. When you cannot find him in secret, there is another place to go to, that is, fellowship meetings: and to these will I go, says the believer: says the spouse, Cant. iii. 1, 2. *By night, I sought him whom my soul loveth*, &c. it is like in secret. *But I found him not*: what next? *I went to the broad ways*, that is, where I knew the people of God were in fellowship meetings; and there I sought him, *whom my soul loveth*. And indeed, if you would find him, it would be as readily there as in many other places. Christ evidenced this, John xx. 10.—There the disciples went home, but it is said, Mary stood without, weeping her alone. She could not think to leave Christ's grave; and what comes of it? she gets a manifestation: Christ spake to her and said, *woman, why weepest thou?* She supposed him to be the gardener until he revealed himself unto her: and then she essayed to take hold of his feet: here was a manifestation in secret. Well, the next manifestation was in fellowship, ver. 19. *When the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said, peace be unto you*.—They durst not keep their public assemblies: Therefore gather together unto private fellowships; for there it is said, Christ came and stood *in the midst of them*; and it is said elsewhere, that he *breathe-d upon them*, and said, your sins are forgiven you.—But I cannot tell (my friends) what is become of the west of Scotland now; for he was not counted much worth in religion that did not meet in Christian fellowship to seek

the Lord.—Men could not have met on the high way but they would have spoken of God and religion: but now that is gone both in life and conversation. It is said, that when it was said to a certain man, that he should venture something for religion: “I cannot tell, (said he) if my religion be so strong, as to bear suffering.” So that your religion is not that strong, as to bring you together to seek God, is a black mark or token of some terrible judgment coming on the land: And if any thing will prevent judgment it is seeking the Lord. But it is a sincere seeking him with the whole heart; The king of Nineveh could tell you that crying mightily to God did prevent ruin.—But we fear the king of Nineveh shall arise in judgment, and condemn many professors in this generation. It is not the hearing of preaching, nor the hearing of presbyterian ministers, (as ye call them,) and that ye will not hear the curates, (alas that there should have been so much compliance with them) will do, without sincere seeking of God. some in the apostle's days, said, they were of Paul, and they of Apollos; but is Christ divided? will ye make more of Christ, and look less to instruments. †

3dly, Another place where ye will find him, is in the public ordinances. Say the daughters of Jerusalem, Song vi. 1. *Whither is thy beloved gone that we may seek him with thee.* Well, what says the spouse? *My beloved is gone down into the garden,* that is, to the church, to gather lillies, that is to gather believers. So ye will find him in his ordinances, and the public assemblies of his people. Says the Psalmist, Psal. lxxiii. 2. *To see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* O to be back at his sanctuary, says the believer; and what would ye see there? Why, I should see Christ, and have a manifestation of his power there. Well, sirs, seeing he has told you so positively where ye will find him; then ye will be inexcusable in the day of the Lord, if ye seek him not. And here we take instruments against you, that the Lord is yet to be found in Scotland. And for all the force, acts, laws, and banishments, Christ is yet to be found there. We need not go over to Holland, France or Germany to seek Christ: He

† N. B. A few sentences of the above two particulars, is extracted from the application of another sermon of the same author on the like subject from Zeph. xi. 3. *Seek ye the Lord; all ye meek of the earth,* to make them more compleat.

He is yet in Scotland, and to be seen in secret, in fellowship, and in the mount of gospel ordinances. Much pains have they taken to chase him away, and with sound of trumpet and tuke of drum commanded him to depart our coasts; but we bless his name, and take it for a token of good, that for all the ways and means they have taken to banish him, he will not go away.—And though they would send off all his household furniture, that so he should not have a minister or professor there; yet he has commanded an arrest that they take not all these out of Scotland, which shews, that he has no mind yet to quit Scotland. And may not that encourage you to seek the Lord? And if ye do not, it will be a great disadvantage unto you. I will tell you, what will come of it: he will be a witness against you. Is he seeking you? And will ye not seek him? Is Christ seeking thy soul's good and welfare, O man and woman? and wilt thou not seek him? O that will be a witness against you. Christ is seeking a church and people to serve and glorify him; and will ye not seek him? This will be a witness against you in the day of the Lord; whatever you may now think of it.

Secondly, I come, in the next place, to tell you of the times, wherein ye will most readily find him. And

1. Ye will find him in the morning of the day, after the rest and refreshment of sleep in the night; and before ye engage your hearts to the world, and the lusts thereof through the day. Engage your heart to seek the Lord then. There are some folk no sooner awake, but the world awakes with them: the world cries, up and serve me; and the Lord says by his word and spirit, rise, man and woman, and serve me. Seek my face and favour, and every good thing from me.—Indeed, the world gets many a favourable answer, while the Lord gets, stand thou by, till the world be served. O this is not right; says the Psalmist, *my voice shalt thou hear in the morning: O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee.* Psal. v. 3. As the first work, says David, I will go to prayer to get the blessing of heaven, and the blessing of my Father who is there. I'll go, and glorify him in the morning of the day.

2. Time, wherein ye will find him is in the morning of your age. Young folk, ye have the advantage of old people here: and how so? they have sitted their time, spent, and sinned it away; but young folk have the time before

before their hand in the morning of their age. O but ye have a great advantage, that ye have the Lord to seek, and your young days to sacrifice to the Lord and for the Lord. Young Josiah, when his heart was young and tender, it is said, *Sought the Lord God of his Fathers.* He has that commendation in the eight year of his reign. Wherefore was it that John was called the beloved disciple, but (as some conjecture) because he was the youngest, that first began to follow Christ? So in the morning of thy age, thou shouldest begin to seek him. Ye see how the Lord calls upon young Samuel. The Lord appeared again, again, and the third time, and he had a secret time to seek the Lord; and for that end his parents sent him there.—There are cursed parents amongst you, who devote your children to the devil and the world, but train them not up to seek and serve God. Hannah brought Samuel unto the temple, and there she left him never to depart; but to be a seeker of God and a server of him, all the days of his life; and he became so; but even when he was very young, the Lord crys, Samuel; and the lad was not acquainted with the Lord. And he tells Eli the business: I heard a voice speaking, and I wot not what it means. At first, Eli is not well instructed in the thing neither; but when he calls again, says Eli, that must be the Lord making acquaintance with you. What shall I do? says Samuel. Why, says Eli, say, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant beareth:* If he has any service for thee, tell him thou art set apart to glorifie him, and serve his church and people. Tell him this and ye will get much of his mind.—Parents, breed your children young, and if they should but hold up their hands to heaven, teach them to acknowledge God. The Turks will rise up in the day of judgment, and condemn many parents; for the first thing they teach them, is, ‘That there is one God, and Mahomet ‘his great prophet.’ I say, that many parents never teach their children, that there is one God.—However, young folk, seek the Lord; for ye have heard tell of young ones that have sought the Lord, and have found him. The

3. Morning in which you are to seek him, is, the morning of the gospel. We have got a new morning of it now; but there was a black night of it by the Glasgow act in Scotland. Many places of the land to this day are like the land of Zebulun and Naphtali; especial-

Is many of these places in the north of Scotland that are sitting in darknes. Pray for them. I think the Highland host, that lately came from thence amongst you, might draw prayers from you. What would they say, Pity us; we are your mother's children: we were baptized in the same church: ye minded your own corner; and ye see, we are but a parcel of savages. Ye did not pray for us, as ye should have done; and it is but just with God, that we should be a plague unto you. If ye have the light and the knowledge of Christ yourselves, ye care not for others, and therefore God has sent us to chastise you for this fault amongst others. A man will perhaps pray for those in his own parish; but O prayer should extend to all Scotland, England and Ireland; nay all the habitable world: *Be thou exalted, O Lord, above the heavens, and let the whole earth be filled with thy glory.* Some places have not yet seen the dawning of the gospel-day. O if they would chase the gospel to the north of Scotland.—O for an entrance there; but while ye have the morning of the gospel, improve it; we cannot tell how long it will last: our sun rises not so high as at other times. Therefore, I pray you, while ye have the gospel and gospel-ordinances, make use of them.—Seek the Lord, and close with him in the offers of his grace; and say, Lord, thou offerest thyself unto me for *wisdom, justification, sanctification and complete redemption*; so here I am with all my soul: I accept of this offer. *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.* I take instruments that thou shalt be my king, priest and prophet. O improve the offers of the gospel. Ye cannot tell how long this morning of it shall be continued with you. Therefore seek the Lord; call on his name. Ye cannot tell how soon he may go, and how far he may go away from you. We shall add no more. The Lord bless what ye have heard, and to his name be the praise.

N. B. There is a number of sermons in manuscript, preached by the same author, which at present could not be got here published.

This Page happening to fall blank, the Publisher thought it might not be improper to insert the following Act.

ACT of the General Assembly anent the Administration of the Sacraments.

THE General Assembly considering, that the two sacraments that Christ hath appointed under the new Testament, *viz.* Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are his solemn ordinances, and seals of the covenant of grace, which is held forth in the preaching of the gospel; and that in the use of them, the parties receiving them are solemnly devoted and engaged to God before angels and men, and are solemnly received as members of the church, and do entertain communion with her; and that by the authority of this church in her former assemblies, the private use of them hath been condemned; as also, that by allowing the private use of the same in pretended cases of necessity, the superstitious opinion is nourished, that they are necessary to salvation, not only as commanded duties, but as means, without which salvation cannot be attained. Therefore the assembly here discharges the administration of the Lord's Supper to sick persons in their houses, and all other use of the same, except in the public assemblies of the church.— And also do discharge the administration of Baptism in private, that is, in any place, or at any time, when the congregation is not orderly called together, to wait on the dispensing of the word; and appoints that this be carefully observed, when and wherever the Lord giveth his people peace, liberty and opportunity for their public assemblies, and ordains this present act to be publicly intimated in all the churches.

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IT is unnecessary for the Publishers either to apologize for an undertaking of this nature, or to pass encomiums on the subject itself, seeing there are few men of taste and learning but will be ready to allow, That *Biography* in general, *i. e.* the lives, deaths and remarkable speeches of eminent persons, is one of the most entertaining parts of history, and more particularly the lives and memorable transactions of our Scots worthies, wherein is contained not only a variety of things edifying and entertaining, but also a short sketch of the covenanted testimony of the church of *Scotland*, as it was by them maintained and handed down to posterity in its different parts and periods, for near the space of two hundred years.

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